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ABSTRACT

School administrators in South Dakota and throughout the United States, in order to fund educational facility replacement and renovation projects, initiate school bond elections that they often have difficulty planning to successful conclusions. This study uses an exploratory data analysis to determine the factors within a community and within the campaign structure that have an effect on school bond election outcomes. Results from interviews reveal these factors to include: having an active citizens support committee and adequate organization; understanding of the needs of the community; effectively communicating of the needs of the schools; using campaign activities that are personal and direct; appealing to the appropriate target audience; and involving all segments of the community in all stages of the campaign. Findings suggest that school boards and administrators need to plan the amount of the bond issue and must demonstrate a good plan for managing the funds after the election. Appendices include sample research materials and interview scripts, a list of the South Dakota codified laws concerning bond elections, and specific actions for implementing an effective school finance campaigns. (Contains 43 references.) (GR)

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FACTORS AFFECTING THE OUTCOMES OF SCHOOL BOND ELECTIONS IN SOUTH DAKOTA

by

Carleton Roland Holt

B.F.A., University of South Dakota, 1969

M.A., University of South Dakota, 1970

C.A.S., Iowa State University, 1980

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Education

Division of Educational Administration
Educational Administration Program
in the Graduate School
University of South Dakota
May 1993

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Abstract

Carleton R. Holt, Ed.D., Educational Administration, University of South Dakota, 1993.

Factors Affecting the Outcomes of School Bond Elections in South Dakota

Dissertation directed by Dr. Floyd Boschee

School administrators in South Dakota, and throughout the United States, are increasingly being faced with the problem of replacing or renovating the numerous aging and inadequate facilities presently in use. Such facilities have been found to be inadquate for meeting the safety and educational needs of students preparing to live and work in the technologically advanced twenty-first century. To fund such projects, school boards must usually initiate school bond elections – proposals that traditionally have been unpopular with voters. Unfortunately, school administrators are generally not adequately trained to deal with the complexities of planning successful school bond issue campaigns.

To increase the probability of passage of these issues, school administrators must understand those factors that have a critical impact on the success or failure of school bond issue campaigns. This study uses an exploratory data analysis to determine those factors within a community, inherent in the proposal, and within the campaign structure that have an effect on the outcomes of school bond elections.

Interviews were conducted with school officials and community members from four selected South Dakota school districts, all of which had recently conducted school bond elections (two successful and two unsuccessful). The results of the analysis reveal factors that are universal, particular to successful campaigns, and particular to unsuccessful campaigns. Overall these factors include: an active citizens support committee, adequate organization, an understanding of the needs of the community, effective communication of the needs of the schools, use of campaign activities that are personal and direct, appeal to the appropriate target audience, and involve all segments of the community in all stages of the campaign. School boards and administrators also need to plan the amount of the bond issue request carefully and need to have a good plan for managing the funds after the election.

School administrators can use this information, along with many of the techniques described in the related literature, to overcome many of the challenges of passing school bond issues. In so doing, they can help their school better meet the educational challenges of the twenty-first century.

This abstract of approximately 270 words is approved as to form and content. I recommend its publication.

Signed Floyd Boschee
Professor in Charge of Dissertation

Doctoral Committee

The members of the committee appointed to examine the dissertation of Carleton Roland Holt find it satisfactory and recommend that it be accepted.

Floyd Boschee

Dr. Floyd Boschee, Chairperson

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Appreciation is given to the superintendent of schools and the district representative interviewees from each of the schools selected for this study. Their sharing has furnished valuable data for consideration by those facing the challenges of school bond election campaigns. I am indebted for assistance given by Pat Peterson of PC Publishing in Vermillion, South Dakota, Dr. Pat Vitale at the University of South Dakota, and Darwin Reider of Kirkpatrick, Pettis, Smith, Polian, Inc. of Omaha, Nebraska.

Thankfulness cannot be adequately expressed to my parents, Archie and Opal Holt, and my aunt and uncle, Phyllis and Ralph McAtee, for their endless love and support in helping me reach this academic goal. Specifically, I want to recognize my wife, Judy, and our children, Austin and Cody, for their contributions, love, sacrifices, patience and support during my graduate program.

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CHAPTER 1

The Problem

Introduction

During 1990 public school districts in the United States spent almost 10 billion dollars on new buildings, additions, and modernization projects. In the same year, the volume of school bonds exceeded 12.4 billion dollars. Increasing enrollments and deteriorating school buildings ensure that construction expenditures will remain high (Zachariya, 1991), and school administrators will continue to be faced with the challenge of raising the necessary tax-based funding for such projects through traditionally unpopular school bond elections. To be successful, administrators must be aware of factors that contribute to the passage of school bond issues and must be able to conduct effective school bond issue campaigns.

This study was undertaken to determine what variables affect school bond election outcomes. The researcher used an exploratory data analysis to examine the information provided in interviews with participants in school bond election campaigns. Using exploratory data analysis for this study was appropriate because it provides an explanation of isolated techniques in action on real data rather than a summary of case histories (Tukey, 1971).

Background of the Problem

The ages of the school buildings currently in use in the United States is clear evidence of the difficulty school officials face when attempting to design successful school bond issue campaigns. The American Association of School Administrators (AASA) reports that nearly five million students in the nation's public schools attend classes in 13,200 inadequate school buildings—one-eighth of the public schools in the country. These facilities are overcrowded and structurally and environmentally hazardous; many have inadequate heating, cooling, and electrical systems. The AASA survey results also indicate that over half of the nation's schools do not have adequate energy programs in an environment in which the costs of energy are increasing at an alarming rate. In their present condition, these aging facilities cannot meet the demands of new educational reforms, and most school districts find that retrofitting such buildings is very costly (Zachariya, 1991).

The situation in South Dakota is certainly no less critical. Reports from the South Dakota Department of Education and Cultural Affairs indicate that half of the public school buildings in the state have outlived their usefulness. The record of school construction projects in the state during the last century clearly delineates the problem. From 1893–1900, only six new school buildings were constructed in South Dakota; during the years from 1901–1930, 286 structures were built. By 1960 the total number of school buildings within the state had increased to 373, and between 1961 and 1980, 200 schools were constructed. From 1981 to 1991, however, only 179 new school facilities were built. The result of the slow down in new school construction is that 46 percent of the public school buildings currently in use are over 30 years old and are inadequate for the technology and outcome-based educational systems of the future ("Aging school buildings," 1991).

Over the next few years, many, if not most, school administrators in South Dakota and the United States will be faced with the problem of finding feasible ways of replacing old school buildings. Most will have to initiate school bond elections to secure the necessary funding. These bond issue elections have been the greatest obstacle to progress. Naturally, in the present difficult economic times, most taxpayers are reluctant to raise their own taxes, even if they are aware of and concerned about the needs of local schools.

The problem of passing school bond issue requests in South Dakota is exacerbated by the statute that governs school bond elections (see Appendix A), particularly the section that deals with the required percentage of favorable votes for passage:

> **6-8B-2. Election required for issuance.** Unless otherwise provided, no bonds may be issued either for general or special

> purposes by any public body unless at an election sixty percent of voters of the public body voting upon the question vote in favor of issuing the bonds. The election shall be held in the manner described by law for other elections of the public body. (South Dakota, 1988)

While the 60 percent requirement protects taxpayers' interests, the nearly 2–1 margin of favorability needed to issue bonds is extremely difficult to attain in most communities. Although specific data on the percent of bond issues that pass or fail in any given year in South Dakota are not available, the consensus among administrators is that almost no bond issues pass on the first attempt and that many fail even after three to five attempts.

Unfortunately, many school administrators are not adequately trained in the techniques necessary for developing a successful community-wide bond election campaign. Many college and university programs leading to state certification for school superintendency provide only a minimal review of the topic and most of the knowledge administrators gain is through "on-the-job" training. This study enabled the researcher, through the use of an exploratory data analysis, to investigate those factors that have an impact on the outcome of school bond elections and the techniques that are most effective in bringing about positive outcomes.

The researcher has been a practicing school superintendent in South Dakota for the past 12 years. During that time he has been involved in four public bond elections for new schools in the Brandon Valley School District. In 1984 a bond issue election was held for a new 54,000 square foot elementary building to house grades three through six. Previously, bond issues for specific projects had been successful only after three or four attempts. After two years of preparation and building the case for a bond election, approval was obtained on the first vote at the 67 percent approval level. Several factors contributed to the positive outcome. First, the administration and school board utilized current literature and a bond consultant to help them prepare a bond issue campaign that would bring registered voters who did not usually participate in elections to the polls to express their willingness to spend tax dollars for the new facility. Second, a group of interested parents was formed to conduct a number of activities (neighborhood walk campaigns, telephone campaigns, and presentations at over 40 public and private group meetings) that outlined the factors involved in the bond issue campaign. This "grass-roots" group was a key element in achieving success at the polls.

Brandon Valley is the fastest growing community in the state and the school board soon found it necessary to ask the voters for an additional facility – this time a new middle school for grades six, seven, and eight. The new building would also have alleviated the overcrowded conditions at both the elementary and high schools, because the functions of existing facilities could be shifted. Severe budget difficulties brought on by increased enrollments, cutbacks in state financial support, and a two-year tax freeze meant that few dollars were available from the capital outlay fund for the proposed construction of the 80,000 square foot, 5.5 million dollar building.

The first bond issue requested four million dollars. A campaign similar to the 1984 effort was put into place; however, the bond issue failed at the 34 percent approval level. A second attempt, again using strategies developed in 1984, was made six months later. The building had been redesigned and several cuts had been made in the proposal; therefore, the public was asked to approve a 3.4 million dollar bond. This measure also failed. Although increasing the number of dollars earmarked for the building project from the district's capital outlay fund caused increased pressure on the district's ability to purchase equipment and make renovations, such a move seemed to be the only alternative for lowering the amount of the bond issue request. Therefore, the next summer a bond election requesting 1.9 million dollars for the middle school facility was held. This time the measure passed at the 64 percent approval level.

While the researcher could draw certain inferences from his experiences about variables related to the success or failure of school bond campaigns in his district, more definitive research needed to be conducted to determine which factors were more universally applicable, how the interrelationship of those factors affected election outcomes, and the techniques school administrators should use to ensure a successful bond issue campaign.

Statement of the Problem

This study explored and compared those factors that contributed to the success or failure of bond elections in four selected school districts in South Dakota. The specific research questions that guided this study include:

1. What variables contributed to the success of school bond elections in two selected school districts?
2. What variables contributed to the failure of school bond elections in two selected school districts?
3. What relationships exist among these variables with regard to selected characteristics of the school districts?

Significance of the Problem

The results of this study provide school administrators with significant information concerning variables that contribute to successful school bond elections in South Dakota. The last study on this subject in South Dakota was conducted by Crosswait (1967), and new research was necessary to determine differences brought about by demographic, political, and/or economic changes in the state. The information can be utilized by administrators throughout the state in developing techniques for dealing with school bond elections.

Definition of Terms

For purposes of clarity in this study, the following terms are defined:

Amount of the bond issue: The number of dollars requested by the school district to fund the proposed school facility.

Bond levy increase: The number of dollars per $1,000 of assessed valuation requested by the school district in the election.

Capital outlay fund: A school district budgetary fund for the purpose of supplying dollars for equipment, repair, renovation, or construction of school buildings or facilities.

Capital outlay certificates: Financial certificates utilized for equipment, repair, renovation, or construction of school buildings or facilities. Repayment of these certificates comes from the capital outlay fund of the school district.

Citizen committee: A group of citizens who band together for the purpose of supporting a school bond election campaign.

Critical impact: A factor perceived by an interviewee in this study as having had a significant impact on the success or failure of a school bond issue campaign.

Date of public vote: The exact date on which the registered voters of the school district vote on the proposed school bond election.

Door-to-door canvass: An activity conducted by a citizen committee in which workers walk to homes and businesses in the school district to convince voters to support their position in the school bond election.

Exploratory data analysis: A research technique that "tends to study many variables and their relationship in order to further understanding of the phenomena" (Borg & Gall, 1989, p. 35). (See Appendix B for further clarification.)

Factors: Those actions or procedures conducted by a school district or citizens support group to inform and sell voters on the importance of a "yes" vote in a school bond election.

Inadequate school buildings: Buildings that do not meet the needs of modern educational requirements due to age, overcrowding, structural hazards, environmental hazards, or inadequate heating, air conditioning, or electrical systems.

School bond election: A request made to the registered voters of the school district for revenue to construct the proposed school facility.

School district size: The number of students enrolled in a school district in grades kindergarten through twelve.

Successful bond issue: A bond issue that receives 60 percent or more favorable votes in the election.

Unsuccessful bond issue: A bond issue request that receives less than 60 percent favorable votes in the election.

Valuation of the school district: The total taxable value from all resources in the school district.

Voter turnout: The number or percentage of registered voters participating in the school bond election.

Limitations of the Study

Although exploratory data analysis does not require homogeneity in the school districts used for the study, the researcher selected a single criterion that is only slightly related to the factors being studied to assist in selecting the school districts. The criterion helped avoid bias or selection of school districts for which responses to the questions would already be known. The median size of school districts in the United States was chosen as the criterion – 2,197 students (Jewel, 1989). Four of the five school districts in the state that were closest to that number in student population size and that had recently held school bond elections were selected. Using the U.S. median somewhat limited the sample available to the researcher, but the number was high enough to ensure that the communities being studied would have both a newspaper and a banker – two of the individuals from the school district who would be interviewed – and would have a somewhat diverse population.

Organization of the Study

Chapter 2 provides an extended review of selected literature and research concerning the factors affecting the success or failure of public school bond election campaigns. Chapter 3 provides an explanation of the methodology and procedures utilized to conduct this study. Chapter 4 presents the findings. The summary, conclusions, discussion, and recommendations are presented in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 2

Review of Related Literature of Selected School Districts in South Dakota

Introduction

Over the past several years, researchers in most regions of the United States have conducted studies to identify factors significant to bond elections, including one in South Dakota about 25 years ago. As well, various educational periodicals have carried articles detailing school officials' first-hand experiences in running school bond election campaigns, both successes and failures. Several studies of school bond elections have also been conducted. The related literature raises many issues that pertain to South Dakota school districts, even though the demographics of most of the school districts discussed in the literature are quite different from those of South Dakota school districts.

South Dakota Research

B.N. Crosswait's (1967) study of factors related to the success and failure of bond issues in independent school districts of South Dakota represents the only formal research conducted in South Dakota on this topic to date. In the study, Dr. Crosswait analyzes the following factors as they relate to the success or failure of school bond elections: time of the election, attitude of the local newspaper, selected site for the new facility, use of consultive services, degree of adherence to the consultants' services, the existence of a citizens committee, methods of utilizing the citizens committee, and the percentage of eligible voters casting ballots. He also attempts to identify innovative procedures.

Crosswait conducted personal interviews with selected individuals from eight matched pairs of districts holding elections. These persons included at least the superintendent and the president of the school board. If a citizens committee had been developed, he also interviewed the chairperson of that group.

The study identifies five factors of importance to the success or failure of bond issue elections. First, school bond elections held during the nine months of the school year are no more likely to succeed than bond elections held at other times. Second, the site chosen for a school facility has an impact on the outcome of the election. Additionally, districts that employ consultive services from colleges and universities are more likely to be successful than those that do not, especially if the consultant's recommendations are closely followed. The bond election is also more likely to succeed if the citizens committee is involved in a variety of activities in addition to "get out the vote" campaigns. Finally, the higher the percentage of eligible voters casting ballots, the more likely the success of the bond election.

The conclusions of this study may at first seem dated in light of the many changes that have taken place in educational settings over the past 25 years. They are, however, generally borne out by reports found in various periodicals.

Periodical Research

Articles in various periodicals provide insights into different aspects of planning and conducting school bond campaigns in several regions of the United States. Many reports include detailed descriptions of activities undertaken in successful bond elections; others outline one or two elements (such as structuring bond proposals) that seem to be key to achieving victories in school bond elections. As well, a few articles deal with problems that may arise in campaigns and offer positive methods for dealing with such situations.

One can find several similarities among those school bond issue programs that have proven successful. Probably the most inclusive study was conducted by Jeanie M. Henry (1971), director of board development for the

South Carolina School Boards Association (SCSBA). The survey compares factors that were different in successful and unsuccessful school bond issue campaigns in South Carolina. Ms. Henry found that public resentment of perceived high property taxes and the criticisms identified from the "Nation at Risk" report of the mid-1980s have made passing bond issues very difficult. She notes, however, that school districts in the state increasingly have been forced to initiate school bond proposals because of the poor condition of many schools, the decrease in teacher/student ratios, and the increased need for classrooms for handicapped and special programs.

The SCSBA survey indicates several important factors that have an impact on school bond election outcomes. One is the student and general population size of the school district. Those with an average enrollment of 5,314 had greater success in bond elections than did larger districts (average enrollment 9,928). Winning districts had an average of 10,068 registered voters as opposed to 19,501 in the districts that failed to support school bond referenda. The study also found that the amount of the bond request had a direct effect on success or failure. Districts having successful issues requested an average of $6.9 million, while unsuccessful districts averaged requests of $10.3 million.

The survey also compared differences in campaign activities and techniques to determine those of greatest importance. Focusing attention on the appropriate group of voters is clearly an important consideration. Of those school districts that were successful in their bond issue campaigns, 84 percent directed their attention at "yes" voter identification techniques; only 56 percent of unsuccessful campaigns employed this technique. A "get-out-the-vote" promotion also seems to be a key element in winning elections. In elections where the bond issue was approved, an average of 44.3 percent of the registered voters turned out; only 35.8 percent of voters turned out in elections where the bond proposal was defeated.

Side issues and opposition groups appear to have an important influence on the outcome of elections. Only 33 percent of school districts in

South Carolina that were successful had to contend with side issues (e.g., private schools versus public schools, poor versus rich, polarization of white and black communities, consolidation, board of trustees elections, poor economy, credibility of school administration and board of education), but 70 percent of losing districts faced such problems. The presence of an organized opposition group was noted in only 37 percent of successful campaigns; conversely, 100 percent of those districts that were unsuccessful faced strong opposition groups (e.g., private interest groups, local taxpayer associations, private school supporters, senior citizens).

Survey respondents also reported the following as reasons bond elections failed: voter and teacher apathy, divided boards of education, oversell of bad school conditions, improperly organized campaigns, politics, citizens' desire to maintain local schools, lack of concern for quality education, a lack of confidence in board of education, black/white polarization and a lack of understanding by the public. Ms. Henry concludes from the survey results that, in order to be effective, school bond issue campaigns must be highly organized, child-centered, and involve members of all segments of the community. The survey identified several activities that respondents felt promoted the bond issue well: providing a speakers bureau and slide presentations, building support by using personal contacts, openness in communicating appropriate information, precinct-level organization, timing of the campaign, positive media coverage, the use of public forums, involving all segments of the community, and precampaign surveying to identify taxpayers' support.

School boards, Ms. Henry reports, need to answer a number of important questions before they start a bond issue campaign: "Does the school district generally have the support of the media?" "Is the Chamber of Commerce and other leaders supportive of the public schools?" "Is the school board unified in their decision to pursue a referendum?" "What is the pulse of the parochial and/or private schools? "What is the past history of school referendum campaigns in the area?" "Are members of the education association and other staff members supportive and willing to work for its passage?" "What side issues could affect the referendum vote?" Ms. Henry cautions that the situation within a school district needs to be carefully analyzed before the campaign is designed.

According to two other reports, analysis and preparation must also include following "Madison Avenue-style" marketing techniques. John G. Conyers and Terry Francl (1989), superintendent and board president of the Palatine School District in Illinois, report that they used such techniques to gain voter approval of a $64 million bond issue by a 2–1 margin.

They list seven marketing tips that will improve a school district's chances of passing bond referenda. The first strategy is to identify the target audience. To achieve success, school district planners must know who will vote and which issues will influence that vote. To gather this type of data, volunteers called every name on a list of registered voters and asked for opinions on the proposed bond issue. From the survey, a list of voters who had indicated support was formulated. This group became the focus group, and their support was encouraged through mailings and telephone calls. Opponents were not contacted again.

The second marketing strategy was to know the "product" well and focus on its strengths. In the Palatine School District, this effort involved forming a committee of staff and community members to conduct a long-range study of building and program needs. This group then analyzed the results of approximately 300 successful bond issue referenda conducted across the United States to determine which issues were likely to sway voters to a positive point of view. The study results indicated that supporters should focus on how the money generated from the bond issue would alleviate overcrowding and provide for computer laboratories, electronic media centers, and modern science facilities.

The next step was to develop a key message – one that would allow consumers to associate the need with a single idea. The planners chose the slogan "Education and Community, Growing Together." This message suggested to voters that voting "yes" was an investment in the future and that good schools pushed property values upward because they enhanced the quality of life in the area.

In choosing an appropriate medium for reaching their focus, planners avoided large newspaper and television campaigns because voters, who are being asked for new funds, tend to respond negatively to the high cost of these forms of advertising. Instead, the district directed its attention at an intense campaign involving the news media, direct mail, and meetings with civic and business groups, parent organizations and community leaders. Their efforts included presentation of a slide and tape show, distribution of a public relations pamphlet, and mailing a reminder postcard to supporters just before election day. District officials met with local newspaper editors to share information and answer questions to obtain newspaper endorsements.

The fifth marketing key is to have a well-prepared campaign strategy; one which encompasses voter registration, publicity, voter surveys, an organized telephone bank, and volunteer precinct observers. The goal is simply to ensure the largest possible turnout of positive voters. To expedite the effort, the elementary and junior high school principals worked with 300 campaign volunteers to coordinate activities and build support. Volunteers made from 200 to 300 phone calls each night to identify supporters and record their names for future contact.

A campaign schedule was then designed for each operation that took place during the four weeks preceding the election day. While the authors believe that an intensive campaign should last no longer than 30 days, much preparation must be done in advance so that target dates can be met.

The final suggestion the authors make is to be prepared to respond to the unexpected. When last-minute opposition appeared, campaign officials scheduled a meeting with concerned parents to share accurate information. They invited reporters to the school to view the situation first-hand and directed attention to the actual difficulties being experienced in the buildings.

Conyers and Francl attribute their success in passing the bond issue to following these seven marketing strategies, but others have used different marketing techniques to organize their campaigns. Graham, Wise, and Backman (1990) designed their campaign along the lines of a modern marketing concept based on maximizing customer satisfaction and solving the problems of the consumer.

The authors believe a big difference exists between marketing and selling. They define selling as getting rid of what you have; marketing is having what you can get rid of. Therefore, they concentrated their efforts on identifying what consumers wanted and how much they were willing to pay for that product.

Like Conyers and Francl, Graham et al. suggest that the first step in planning the campaign must be identifying and analyzing the target market to be served. Such an analysis must also clarify the market need, the needs currently being met, and areas of additional satisfaction that can be developed. The authors suggest that a survey instrument is a critical factor in gathering this type of information. They contend that most campaigns have one-third of the voters in favor of the proposal, one-third against the proposal, and one-third undecided. The survey should identify those individuals who already support the bond referendum and which issues would sway the middle group of voters to support the bond issue.

To assist in developing an appropriate survey instrument, groups of individuals who represent a cross-section of the community should be formed to provide input as to what questions would be appropriate. The survey, which should be conducted about six months prior to the election, must also be designed so that it produces accurate information. The sample size used is of major importance to obtaining the type of information needed. Usually, a sample size of between 100 and 200 individuals is needed to ensure a margin of error of plus or minus five percent. If the survey indicates that 65 percent of the contacts were in support of the campaign, the actual number of "yes" voters falls somewhere between 60 percent and 70 percent.

To determine the percentage of individuals that should be surveyed within a particular area of the school district, planners should calculate what percentage of the entire group of voters in the most recent election on a financial issue came from each precinct. The percentage of the sample for that precinct should match that figure. The next step is to identify the names of streets in each precinct and, using a table of random numbers, select the streets needed.

Those conducting the survey should be sure they interview an individual within the household who is of voting age, but the person does not necessarily need to be a registered voter, as that status might change by election day. As much as possible, the surveys should be conducted by experienced interviewers. If volunteers are used, they should be carefully trained to avoid practices that would prejudice the results of the interview, such as expressing agreement or disagreement, campaigning, and/or discussing the results of the process. They should not survey in neighborhoods where they are known.

In addition to identifying the needs and problems of the community, survey results can be used to project the outcome of the election. This is calculated by adding 90 percent of those responding "certainly vote for," 60 percent of those responding "almost certainly vote for," 30 percent of those responding "probably vote for," and 10 percent of those responding "uncertain." The sum of these numbers can be divided by the total numbers of surveys. The figure allows planners to determine what type of campaign must be launched to reach the needed percentage of "yes" votes.

After determining the needs, planners must concentrate on product development. Schools must identify which features of the bond referendum voters perceive as benefits and focus their efforts on these key elements. In this step the planners must develop a price strategy (the surveys should have clearly identified the amount of a tax increase the voters would support).

The authors believe that all of the above factors should be taken into consideration when the promotional and distribution aspects of the campaign are planned. This will ensure that the message is carried to the appropriate audience. They further suggest that the campaign should target positive voters and those in the middle who may be swayed. Personal, one-on-one contact of volunteers, board members, and school administrators with the voting public is probably the most important tool of the campaign. All can participate as community speakers, as members of panels at town meetings, and as guests on call-in programs. Campaign brochures and a video or slide/tape presentation should also be used, as should a tax table that compares the increase in property taxes with the present level of taxes paid and/or a break-down of tax increases into cost-per-day so that the increase appears smaller compared with other daily expenditures.

The authors emphasize the importance of a follow-up research activity to identify what worked and what did not. The information gathered from the activity is valuable to planning future campaigns. It is also important to control the responses of supporters of the bond issue following the election. A bond issue victory is not the time to gloat; the support of the opposition may be needed in future campaigns. If the bond issue loses, supporters should treat it as just one step in a long-range process of developing community support.

The authors of several articles, all of whom have conducted school bond elections, offer detailed descriptions of how the above general suggestions are used in different settings. Most stress the importance of understanding the needs of the community and securing broad-based community involvement in developing successful campaigns.

Dale Romanik (1987), for example, reports on how the Dade County Public Schools in Florida, utilized an extensive telephone survey to gather information about public attitudes toward the schools and to help determine the timeliness of launching a bond issue campaign. The school district contracted with an independent research company experienced in conducting telephone surveys to gather the appropriate data.

The firm utilized random digit dialing to poll 400 Dade County registered voters likely to vote in the March 1988 presidential primary and/or in a special election on funding for public schools. While this may seem a small number for Dade County's large population, the sample size provided a 95 percent confidence level and was within plus or minus 4.5 percent of the result that would have been obtained if every registered voter in the county had been interviewed. The staff of the research company trained 14 interviewers for the project.

The instrument used in this survey was developed with the assistance of resource persons from the University of Miami, Florida International University, and Miami-Dade Community College. The final survey included 44 questions, some specifically designed for Dade County and others taken verbatim from surveys used by other school districts and by the Gallup Organization in their annual poll of people's attitudes toward schools.

The survey indicated that a majority of respondents believed the school district needed to build new schools and renovate older schools, and that they would support a bond issue to fund improvements. The voters also indicated that they were probably more likely to support a bond issue vote in a special election than they would during a presidential primary vote. Even though these initial findings were encouraging, the survey revealed that voters perceived a limit to their support. Eighty percent of the respondents were supportive of a bond issue until the tax increase level reached an estimated $60 per year for the next 30 years. At that level, support dropped to approximately 67 percent.

The survey also found that the public was generally satisfied with their schools, but that many felt public schools nationally provided a better education for students than their local schools. The respondents felt familiar with the needs of the schools and rated the school's staff more positively than national averages. They identified the lack of teachers, a lack of discipline, dropouts, and school overcrowding as the major problems facing the school district. Respondents indicated that, if funding was unavailable, they would prefer larger class sizes to solve the overcrowding problems.

Romanik reports that obtaining such information was critical to proposal development and long-term planning. It helped the board design a proposal that would have the greatest potential of passing and allowed them to make realistic campaign decisions.

In a separate article, Michael Krop (1989), chair of the school board, shares the strategies that were then developed and implemented for the school bond campaign in Dade County. In 1986 the school district faced massive overcrowding and aging school buildings. The school staff considered a variety of alternatives to solve their problems: reducing operating budgets, providing capital outlay funds, conducting separate morning and afternoon school sessions, and opening schools year round. After review, however, none of these options appeared to be feasible.

Based on the results of the telephone survey, the board decided unanimously to seek a bond issue for the construction of 49 new schools and renovation of 259 existing school buildings, at a cost of 980 million dollars. The board's first course of action was obtaining the support of the local teacher's union, the Parent Teacher Association, and the greater Miami business community. Members of these groups formed an independent political action committee called "Better Schools for a Better Tomorrow," which organized community support and raised funds (Florida state law prohibits the use of public funds for any activities other than providing information).

Seven months after the board vote, the "Vote Yes" campaign began. Mr. Krop describes the heart of the campaign as the grass-roots effort to reach out to the voters during the eight months before the election. The key was providing speakers to make presentations directly to the voters.

School-based community meetings allowed the principal at each school to explain the program to parents; town hall meetings were held during which the superintendent, school board members, and staff members met with residents living in neighborhoods surrounding each of the district's 25 high schools. Community leaders developed a speakers bureau to share information with professional and civic organizations and utilized the district's internal television network to educate staff members on the bond issue. The committee organized voter registration drives among the teachers, parents, and older students, as these persons were the most likely supporters of the school bond referendum.

Dade County has a large senior citizen population, and the district's survey indicated that they would support the bond issue if they were convinced of the need. Therefore, much attention was directed toward this effort. The activities proved successful, and senior citizens supported the bond issue at the 70 percent level, a margin greater than any other voting block in the school district. The bond issue passed by a 53 percent total margin (50% being required to pass a bond issue in Florida).

The school board did not, however, just leave the situation there. They realized that responsible management of the bond money was essential to continued public support and success at future bond elections. To that end, several top-level staff, board members and Mr. Krop traveled to New York City to meet with officials of the larger bond-rating companies. Their mission was to achievé the best possible bond rating for the school district, because the better the rating, the lower the interest paid on the bonds. Krop recommends that a bond financial consultant be hired to deal with the complexities of the bonding process. Due to the size of the construction project, the author also indicates that the school district hired a project management consultant.

James Surratt (1987), in his presentation at the annual meeting of the American Association of School Administrators in New Orleans, Louisiana, also reported that a telephone survey was critical to passage of a $112 million bond issue in the Volusia County School District in Central Florida. This district's student population is increasing by 1,500 to 2,000 students per year, requiring 60 new classrooms and at least two new elementary schools each year. This rapidly developing area also has a large senior citizen population, which represents a significant voting block.

School officials decided to base their campaign on an effort to show the community that quality education is essential for a community's economic development. The strategy was to target the "yes" voters, promise not to raise school construction taxes for the next five years, and promise to air condition every school building in the district.

In September the district administrators developed a nine-month campaign strategy. They used the results of a state facilities survey as a comparison to the facility recommendations identified by building-level principals and advisory committees. The comparison was used to generate the total needs list. Potential costs ranged from $70 million to $130 million. The board approved a $112 million bond program, which included six elementary schools, a middle school, a senior high school, and a vocational center. The project also provided for renovations and additions at 27 sites and an air-conditioning program for all district schools.

To determine community support, the board authorized a telephone survey, to be completed during January of 1986. The results indicated that a substantial majority of voters supported the bond issue, and, based on those indications, the board proceeded with the campaign.

The primary strategy revolved around the involvement of key community leaders. A citizens committee, made up of business leaders and volunteers, was formed to raise funds and share information with the community. The Chamber of Commerce took on the bond program as a special project, distributing materials, hosting meetings and contributing money. Business and civic leaders served as speakers at a variety of community meetings and were the campaign's greatest supporters. Another committee of PTA leaders and school advisory committee members was organized to take the campaign to the school level, where firm support was needed.

Using this variety of techniques, the school district was able to pass the bond issue by a four-to-one margin. Mr. Surratt points to several other critical elements that he believes have to be a part of any successful campaign. The first essential is a total commitment from each and every school board member and administrator. He also indicates the importance of creating a well-coordinated speakers bureau to "get the message out" to the community. Other public relations efforts should include distribution of endorsement letters, gaining the support of the religious community, conducting continuous forums at schools throughout the district, developing a comprehensive media program, and utilizing posters, brochures, bumper stickers, and slogan handouts. The author also recommends using a final-week postcard campaign and telephone campaign, and, on election day, offering voters rides to the polls.

Surratt also addresses the issue of financial management as important to developing a proposal that voters will support. In his district, the board reduced the amount of millage in their capital improvement tax and increased the amount of debt service. They could then keep the tax rate at the exact amount taxed in previous years. As a result, the amount of capital improvement tax could be increased as the debt service rate decreased. At the same time, the board could maintain a steady level of money for the capital improvement program. The district also developed a construction advisory committee, made up of citizens with expertise in the construction field, to confer with the school's facilities staff on a regular basis. This interactive program created an atmosphere positive to voters if a bond issue was required in the future.

Victor J. Ross (1983), associate superintendent of the Aurora (Colorado) Schools, also points to the importance of understanding the needs and opinions of the community. He describes how his district utilized a careful campaign to win a $2.4 million referendum by a vote of 5,107 to 3,227, after having lost a similar election by a similar margin the previous year. His word of advice to other school officials: "Don't be daunted by defeat; score a bond issue victory." The efforts he details indicate the importance of knowing the particular needs of the community and using a citizens committee to "sell" the school district.

The first critical step he took after the first bond referendum failed was to analyze the results. A critical part of the process was indentifying precincts within the district that had not supported the referendum. Voters in these areas were telephoned and asked ab[illegible]heir reasons for not supporting the bond issue. This information was utilized to carefully develop plans for the next campaign.

Ross determined that the school district needed to develop an improved public relations program and a year-round communications program. To this end the Aurora district created an ad hoc public relations improvement committee to implement more than 100 events held in the district's 42 school buildings at times convenient for working parents. The school district also distributed a newsletter to every community resident that reflected a positive image of the school.

In his analysis of the school bond election defeat, Ross also found that older citizens tended to vote against the proposal; therefore, the district made a special effort to develop a citizens volunteer program that included a grandparents day, senior citizens volunteer classroom aides program, and an adopt a grandparent project. Such activities were designed to help older individuals identify with the needs of the young people in the Aurora schools.

Ross' next step was to develop a core of volunteers who were willing to share information about school curriculum and programs with others in the district. When a "better schools" committee was established, Ross advised its members that they should know the proposed 1983 budget line by line, item by item—as well as the school officials knew it. By stressing the importance of supplying accurate information to the public, Ross supported his belief that voters will support schools if they are presented with a solid case. He contends that if steps are taken to identify the needs of the community and improve the image of the schools a defeat can be turned into a victory.

Raj K. Chopra (1988) supports Ross' basic contention. In his article, he outlined how the Shawnee Mission School District in Kansas passed a $21.5 million bond issue for school construction and renovation, after just receiving approval for a $13.5 million tax increase. He attributes the success to a campaign that focused on convincing the voters that the needs outlined really existed. To get their message to the community, Chopra maintains that school leaders must supply concrete facts to support levy requests, use sound public relations techniques, and organize community support groups.

At the time of this election, the school district was looking at an $800,000 deficit in the 1987 budget. They had also been forced to close several schools in certain sections of the community due to declining enrollments. In other sections of the district, however, growing commercial and residential areas required new schools. To counter these negative factors, Chopra prepared a report, "A Time to Choose," that explained the district's budget situation and the need for voters to decide how great a priority they placed on quality schools. The report outlined the cutbacks that would take place in course offerings and staff size because of the budget shortfall. He did not offer any recommendations at this time, and during the next several months the topic was covered by the press and circulated through the community. At the same time community leaders were formed into a 35-member committee for excellence. This committee quietly talked with civic groups to gain their support for the upcoming tax hike.

When the superintendent presented his second report to the board of education, detailing the tax increase for school operations, 5,000 residents attended the meeting to support the referendum and guarantee active support. In a four-week campaign, local businesses raised $45,000 for materials that parents, teachers, and principals distributed on a door-to-door campaign. On weekends, teachers stood outside grocery stores and shared the need for this referendum with shoppers. The effort produced a 70 percent approval vote.

Within a few months, the district completed research on a five-year plan, which required $13 million for two new elementary schools and $8.5 million for renovations and additions to existing school facilities. The administration presented this new plan to the school board with the same level of publicity as the first bond issue.

The aim of this second campaign was to help the community understand the consequences of overcrowding in the schools – namely, busing children to other schools in the district. The citizens committee had not disbanded because they knew the second program would be occurring; however, they did expand the committee to 75 members.

Again, the committee raised the necessary funds to finance the campaign. Teams of board members and citizen leaders presented information at local civic organization meetings. Staff members provided much of the manpower for campaign activities. When opposition occurred during the campaign, the committee and school staff responded by presenting the facts through newspaper columns, pamphlets, advertising, and door-to-door campaigning. Again their efforts were rewarded; this time, with a 58 percent victory margin.

The author also outlines some of the financial management steps the board undertook to help convince the public. His basic belief is that money should never remain idle. The district put all the money generated into an interest-bearing account until it was needed for a bill payment. They renegotiated their contract with the bank so that interest was paid on money in the account until the checks were cashed. Chopra also suggests that past spending practices should be reviewed, so that money was not removed from an account before it was needed.

The district keeps close watch on interest rates on various types of accounts. Chopra suggests that districts look for the highest return, in a conservative way, for public moneys. Banks should be required to bid for school dollars. This helps a district ensure that it is receiving the highest possible interest for all invested dollars.

The Shawnee district also campaigned for a high bond rating. School officials went to New York City to convince the national bond houses to upgrade their bond rates, allowing them to sell bonds at a lower interest rate. Finally, they sold their bonds over a three-year period. They felt that they should not pay interest on bonds they did not have to sell until the money was needed for the construction process. The author believes that districts will have an easier time winning approval on their next levy if these procedures and guarantees are shared with taxpayers.

In his article "Turning No to Yes on Bond Issues," James E. Swalm (1989) also emphasized the importance of building a strong case for need in a community that has economic problems. The Town of Boonton schools was faced with a serious dilemma. A number of industries had left the city, creating economic hardship, and a majority of the residents had no children (in fact, senior citizens made up 20% of the population). But something had to be done in terms of renovating school buildings, because a number of code and safety deficiencies had been identified. A 66-year-old school also needed substantial improvements to allow the offering of a modern middle school program.

The school board, in their concern to avoid portraying the wrong image, hired a professional public relations firm. They asked the superintendent and a staff member interested in public relations to develop, along with two board members and two resident volunteer public relations professionals, the district's communication effort.

The committee patterned their design after information from the New Jersey School Boards Association. Their slogan for the four-month campaign was "Boontons School-Rebuilding for the 21st Century."

A citizens group, including representatives from every major segment of the community, was formed to provide input and oversee the entire effort. This group directed its attention to promoting the renovations as a necessity for preparing students for the twenty-first century. They wanted to show the community that the problems had been studied for several years and that the proposed plan was the most economical means of correcting identified deficiencies.

The campaign utilized several tools. Volunteers made presentations to groups within the community that included a slide/tape presentation, information about the necessity for change and information about the state mandates that were dictating the changes. The citizens committee had identified a number of groups in town where such presentations would be beneficial. Unfortunately, the committee was unable to meet the large number of requests.The public relations steering committee developed two newsletters. The first provided a description of the project, including floor plans and construction estimates. The second dealt with the issues of school safety and health and how the changes were necessary to protect the students. Two other releases used the question and answer format to share information on major issues identified by the citizens committee as concerns of the voters.

The weekly newspaper ran a question and answer column for two weeks to answer any concerns raised by citizens in the community. The committees also sponsored public meetings at each of the three schools to share information and answer questions.

The citizens committee conducted a door-to-door campaign, and the day before and the day of the election they conducted a telephone campaign. They urged those who had indicated support to get to the polls. They also answered any last-minute questions. At 7:00 p.m., they called individuals who had not as yet voted, and parent volunteers were available to give rides to the polls. The result was a three-to-two margin of victory on the bond issue. (For a complete checklist of campaign activities from this project, see Appendix C.) The author also identifies the change of attitude in the district to the support of members of the community, the excellent preparation, and leadership that focused on telling the district's needs to the people.

Richard D. Greig (1990), superintendent of a rural Virginia school district, shared similar experiences during a recent bond issue campaign. Although the average income in his district falls below the norm, the results of a campaign survey indicated a very positive attitude of voters toward their schools. It also showed that many of the voters recognized the impact schools have on the local economy and the social life of the community.

The author suggests that a grass-roots organization should be formed early in the planning stage of the campaign. The ideas of this group must flow naturally out of the needs perceived by the people, which in turn must be transmitted into a positive and active bond campaign. Greig emphasizes that the campaign must focus on future generations and the consequences of not acting, and he advocates centering the district's arguments on providing a safe environment for children and on the role good schools have in attracting business and industry to the community.

Mr. Greig believes that the best campaigns are planned well in advance of the election and involve utilizing the skills of many individuals. In such a project, he advocates a strong leadership role for the superintendent, who must be able to help pro-bond groups deal with both real and imaginary obstacles.

George F. Hamel (1984), director of community relations for the Fairfax County Public Schools in Virginia, also reported on the use of an active citizens committee in a school bond campaign in 1981. Several factors cast doubts about a positive outcome to the election. Only four of the last seven bond issues had passed, and those had won by narrow margins. The timing of the election was also problematic in that the vote was scheduled for the same time as the general election, which included many contested races and other requests for spending (for a correctional facility and highway improvements). The school district also faced an "image" problem. The board had recently closed seven elementary schools because of decreased enrollment, and, as a result, many citizens had vowed to oppose any future school bond referenda. Public relations work was hampered; traditional PTA involvement was precluded because a new committee organization had not been funded. Even with all of these problems, the proposed capital improvement program referendum, totaling $57.1 million, was approved by 60.5 percent of the voters and was supported in all eight election districts. Mr. Hamel attributes much of the victory to the formation of a citizens committee.

After approving the referendum proposal, the school board named a highly respected former school board chairman and a long-time PTA activist as co-chairs of a citizens committee. Each board member then named 10 people to serve on the committee. Virginia law limits the use of public funds to the distribution of information, so the citizens committee's first responsibility was to raise money for the campaign. They also assumed responsibility for informing voters of critical information about the referendum program.

During the campaign, the committee distributed a total of 7,500 buttons and 15,000 bumper stickers throughout the community. They mailed brochures to all county residents the week before the referendum. Volunteers spoke at community and organizational functions, often using a video tape featuring the school board chairperson and the superintendent describing features of the referendum. They developed positive relations with the news media by hosting a press luncheon at the beginning of the campaign, encouraging a "letters-to-the editor" campaign, and purchasing ads in the newspapers. As a result, all major media outlets endorsed the referendum.

Michael L. Barney (1984), a senior control construction manager for Elzinga and Volkers, Inc. of Jamesville, Wisconsin, also emphasizes the importance of community involvement in his article "Successful Bond Issue Organization." He developed a plan that he believes is applicable in many communities.

Mr. Barney suggests the formation of three committees to steer the course of the election campaign. The first is a resource team appointed by the board of education to provide input directly to the board on different aspects of the bond issue. The members should include the board's building committee members, the superintendent of schools, the architect, and a construction manager. A financial consultant and a county representative would also be appropriate candidates for this committee. A three-member campaign steering committee should then be formed. The chair of that committee should be someone who is interested in the community and is able to remain above the tumult that often develops in a bond issue campaign. Administrators then select 35 community members to serve on the citizens committee. Members, who work under the direction of the steering committee, should represent various segments of the entire community: blue collar, white collar, young, old, male, female, pro, and con.

The resource team develops a bond issue program schedule that includes a general outline for activities and timelines up through the construction phase of the approved facility. The citizens committee then analyzes the proposal in terms of cost, alternatives, etc. The committee then makes a unanimous recommendation to the board for future action (A unanimous recommendation is critical in that most boards of education will not support a nonunified committee decision). If the recommendation is to proceed with the campaign, members of the board of education usually feel more comfortable about approving the campaign because they have not been totally responsible for the decision making.

The next step involves developing a networking system. The citizens committee joins forces with board members and school administrators to form a group of about 50 couples. Each of the couples finds five other couples willing to deliver "yes" votes on election day. Each new couple finds two additional couples, and so on, until the projected number of "yes" votes needed is reached. Each couple reports their original contacts to the steering committee chairperson who monitors the numbers. This program depends on teamwork among many different resources, but Barney believes that following this program will ensure that the needs of school districts will be identified, remembered and met.

Kris Taylor (1984), supervisor of communication services for the Austin Independent School District in Texas, outlines still another community involvement program in her article "Bond Elections: Running a Successful Campaign." While passing bond issues is not easy in any size school district, it is particularly difficult in urban school districts where the majority of registered voters do not have children in school (the national average of non-parent voters in 1980 was 68%, making the 60% bond issue requirement extremely difficult to obtain). Even so, in 1983 the Austin School District successfully passed bond issues to build new schools and renovate older buildings. The key to the success, according to Ms. Taylor, was the development and implementation of a two-year program called "Forming the Future."

The plan includes utilization of broad-based community involvement in the process of identifying long-range, district-wide needs and establishing school district goals in the areas of bond issues, curriculum, and financial planning. Building principals were asked to develop school-community leadership teams composed of parents, staff, non-parents, neighborhood associations, religious groups, senior citizens groups, PTAs, and school district employees.

A well-known individual from each of these groups was identified as the chairperson. He/she was responsible for setting up speaking engagements, recruiting volunteers, securing endorsements, and distributing information. Similar groups were developed for fund raising, finance, and publicity. A speakers bureau was also established.

Staff members from the school district were assigned to each of the committees to serve as contact persons for members of the committees. The school district also prepared a comprehensive handbook, which outlined specific duties and responsibilities and established timelines for campaign tasks.

Texas law prohibits the use of public funds for anything other than disseminating information; therefore, the Austin City Council of Parent-Teacher Associations became the most important group in the campaign. They were able to develop a highly involved campaign effort that was the basis for the successful bond referendum. They used the slogan "back school bonds" to get at the fundamental themes of the campaign: overcrowding in the current schools and the economic and educational inadequacy of adding more portable buildings, the rapid growth in the city, and the need for major repairs and renovations. They also distributed information on other important community issues such as the need for energy conservation, improved handicapped accessibility, and a conservative fiscal management policy.

A speakers bureau, made up of about three dozen individuals from all segments of the community, was developed. The volunteers made presentations to various community organizations. Each speaker was accompanied by a school district staff member who was well acquainted with various issues, and who could assist the speaker with information concerning specific items.

A phone bank was also used. Originally, the phone bank was used to contact all registered voters approximately four weeks before the election. At this time the volunteers obtained valuable information concerning expected trends. The committee found that support for the bond issue was very strong, but they decided not to release this information, fearing a drop in enthusiasm among supporters.

The real push in the election came during the final three weeks of the campaign. A rally was held to kick off the intensive campaign. Invitations were sent to members of the previous committee's "citizens for school bonds," PTA officers, and school district personnel. All were encouraged to bring family and friends, and all received contribution envelopes and endorsement cards along with the invitations.

An information hotline was developed by PTA volunteers. It was manned eight hours a day, seven days a week, during the three weeks before the election. Again, the volunteers directed questions about which they were not certain to school district personnel, who would return the call as quickly as possible.

Beginning 10 days prior to the election, the PTA conducted a block-walking campaign during which volunteers distributed an information brochure prepared by the school district (in accordance with state law the brochure was strictly informational and did not endorse the bond package). They also distributed door hangers, yard signs, bumper stickers and buttons.

The phone bank volunteers entered phase two of their effort. They recontacted all registered voters to identify probable voters and their status as yes, no, or undecided. "Yes" voters were thanked and reminded to vote. Undecided voters were given a short sales pitch, and "no" voters were thanked and left alone from that point on. Just prior to the election, the volunteers contacted "yes" voters and undecided voters with the message "be sure to vote."

All paid media advertising occurred during the last two weeks of the campaign. Twenty thousand dollars was spent for radio and television spots and $3,000 went for newspaper ads. The district's communications department arranged news and public affairs coverage, and the director appeared on local radio and television talk shows. The week prior to the election, a four-part series on the local bond issue appeared in the "neighbor" section of the newspaper. An advertising agency specializing in minority public relations assisted by utilizing minority community leaders instead of professional announcers. Endorsement postcards were provided in Spanish, and African-American and Hispanic voters received special mailings. The success of the campaign activities was reflected by the large victory margin at the polls, three-to-one for new projects and four-to-one for renovations. Mr. Taylor believes the tremendous success can be credited to the careful plan and high level of community involvement.

Community involvement of another sort is described by Paul D. Houston (1985), superintendent of schools in Princeton, New Jersey, in his article outlining a school bond campaign that resulted in two bond approvals in seven years. In his plan, citizens were asked to participate in the process from the very beginning. Administrators provided the board of education with a list of needed projects. After reviewing the information, the board decided which projects were high priority and could not be funded by normal operational or capital budgets. They then solicited a committee of citizens to help choose which projects were most important to the community and might receive positive support in a bond campaign. The committee also advised the board concerning the appropriate timing for attempting the bond issue. Although final decisions are made by the board of education, utilizing a committee such as this helped develop a network of support for board actions. Traditionally, the committees were quite large and included members representative of different segments of the community. The district also asked municipal government departments to submit names for potential nominees. Parents, staff members and senior citizens were also included on the committee.

The board of education officially identified this committee as a bond advisory committee. A member of the school board, principals and other key school administrators served in an ex officio capacity. Superintendent Houston points out that the committee selected their own chairperson, and that their main project was to review proposals submitted by architects and school administrators. The author identifies the importance of selecting a flexible architectural firm willing to work within the politics of the planning process.

On renovation projects, committee members took extensive tours through the buildings to gain a full appreciation of the difficulties experienced by students and staff. Committee members also were encouraged to share their thoughts with friends and neighbors to gather as much input as possible.

When the investigative process was complete, the committee recommended the amount of money required for each project to be included in the referendum. Superintendent Houston suggests that this process forces the school district to trust in the decisions of the public committee; however, they have found that "half a loaf is better than no loaf" in achieving bond issue success. As the process concluded, committee members voted on the various projects by assigning a weight to each item. This insured that the most popular projects are the ones that survive the process. The ranking procedure also gave the board of education an idea of what could and should be done within the recommended amount of dollars, and allowed them to make the appropriate cutbacks or expansions to meet the recommendations of the committee.

Houston believes that this approach to formulating bond referendum proposals increases the chance of bond election success because the proposals offered have already withstood a "community review." He also believes that the plan can easily be adopted in other communities, if school officials are willing to turn decision making authority over to the community.

Jerry J. Herman (1991) also believes in involving the community in the early planning stages of any construction project, but his article points, as well, to the need to pay special attention to careful planning in the stages preceding the actual preparation of the bond proposal. He identifies a number of control points that, if followed, can increase the potential for success throughout the project.

Herman believes the first control point is to identify the need, and he maintains that it is critical to have a large committee representative of the community engaged in this process. This committee should review pupil enrollment, study the adequacy of the existing facility to meet future educational needs, and the conditions of existing buildings and sites. The committee then makes its recommendations to the board of education. The involvement of this committee offers a tremendous advantage in school bond elections, in that the needs were established by the community – not by school administrators whom the community may not trust to be looking out for their interests.

The second control point established by Herman is the design of the program. In this phase, it is critical to obtain as much input as possible from staff members. The number of pupils to be housed, the types of programs to be offered, the space needed for each offering, and the needs of support services should all be considered carefully when beginning this process. The plan should give sufficient detail to allow voters to see exactly what they will be getting for their tax dollars.

The next control point is the contracting of the architect. Herman suggests that the school board, a citizens committee, the educational staff committee, and administrators should work together to interview three to five architectural firms that have done considerable work in school design. Herman suggests that individuals visit projects completed by the top two candidates. Herman warns that it is important to make it clear that no substitute architects will be allowed without prior approval of the school's authorized representative.

The fourth control point deals with the need for establishing the bond issue. When the school costs have been identified, Herman suggests that school officials hire a specialized bond attorney to handle legal requirements, develop a positive prospectus for the school district, take community leaders to ask bond rating services to reach out to a higher level, and determine the best payment schedule for the community. Three types of payment schedules are available. The first is a front-loaded schedule where payments are larger in the beginning. This process reduces interest rates, but increases the tax rate. A second choice is the rear-loaded schedule, in which payments increase through the years of the bond. While this keeps the tax rate lower in the beginning, it adds interest costs to the total package. The final choice is identified as even-loaded payments, in which all payments are at an even level throughout the years of bond re-payment.

Herman's fifth control point identifies several critical steps necessary in selling the bond issue to the voters. Again, he stresses the importance of broad-based community involvement. He encourages the use of a video tape and a speakers bureau to get appropriate information to as many segments of the community as possible. Information should also be distributed through mailings, public meetings, phone banks, and call-in programs on radio and television. Herman makes a special point that it is important to clearly state on all materials that the support material is paid for by the citizens committee.

A straw pole vote may also be used to gather important data as to opinions in the community and to point to areas where opposition is the greatest. This would allow the committee to better utilize their time and money on a targeted audience.

On the day of the bond issue election, the author suggests a "get-out-the vote" telephone campaign and arranging for absentee ballots and free transportation for supportive voters. One point the author makes concerns the wording of the referendum. He suggests that the proposal should include not only the building, but also approval of funds for a suitable site and equipment for the building.

The sixth control point Herman lists is the selling of the bonds to investors. The author believes that bids should be obtained from numerous sources, with a bid bond accompanying all bids. The bid specification should state that the owner has the right to accept or reject any or all bids.

Herman's seventh control point returns to the hiring of the architect. He suggests that schools attempt to negotiate the architect's fee. He believes one to three percent can be saved from the Standard American Institute of Architects Contractual Document. The architect's contract should include a schedule of required meetings, the requirement that the "clerk-of-the-works" report directly to the owner's representative, a statement that change orders will not be approved until authorized in writing by both the architect and the owner's representative, an identified schedule of payments to the architect and contractors, the names of partners responsible for communicating to the district on all matters, and a statement that the architects shall not receive fees on any change order exceeding one-half of one percent.

Bidding the construction is the eighth control point. Specifications and drawings must be approved by state and local government units, as well as by the board of education. The architect will assist in the bid process and the reward should go to the lowest "reliable" bidder. A bid bond, normally five percent of the bid amount, should be required with the bid specification. Unsuccessful bidders should have their bid bonds returned immediately following the bid opening procedure.

The ninth control point is the official written minutes of all meetings during the construction of the school building. Monthly written and oral reports should be presented at official board meetings. The tenth and final control point is completion of the punch list and payment schedule. Herman suggests that a visual inspection be made by the clerk-of-the-works, the architect, and a school district representative of all items on the final punch list as provided by the contractor. Once the inspection is completed, the architect formally recommends that the board of education accept the building at an official board meeting. The author reminds school districts that the construction process is usually not finished on schedule. This provides opportunities for money to be left in accounts to capitalize on extra interest payments.

Even with careful planning, school district officials often face specific problems when preparing their bond election campaigns and must adapt their programs to meet these challenges. Kenneth L. Calkins (1986), communications coordinator for the Highline School District in Seattle, Washington, identifies a new concern now facing many school districts – the issue of absentee voters. Calkins, unlike many officials who support absentee balloting, contends that absentee voters are not a benefit in a bond campaign and cautions against supporting measures, such as those passed in Washington and Oregon, that ease the restrictions on absentee voting.

To determine the effect of absentee voting on school bond elections, Mr. Calkins examined previous voting patterns. He found that in the 1970s absentee voters displayed voting patterns similar to those of individuals who went to the polls to vote. During the 1980s, however, the voting patterns appeared to change. In a 1984 election, for example, poll voters favored the school bonds by slightly more than 60 percent; however, the absentee vote created only a 50 percent success level, causing the bond issue to fail the 60 percent approval required.

To determine the reasons such a situation had occurred, the author conducted a survey of absentee voters from the 1984 election. A list of 1,000 names was purchased and addresses were randomly selected from the county election department through a private computer mailing list firm. A form letter and a questionnaire were sent to each of the absentee voters. The survey was returned by 16.3 percent of those surveyed. Seventy percent of the voters said they had voted "yes" on the bonds. While this contradicts the actual 50 percent favorable vote, the high "yes" ratio is probably due to the greater tendency of "yes" voters to return the surveys. Only 41 percent of those returning surveys indicated that they had received information from the schools, even though the bond issue support committee had sent two mailings to all residents. The same percentage indicated that they had learned about the bond issue from the newspaper. Lesser numbers identified friends, neighbors, telephone calls and the election committee as sources for information.

Calkins concluded from the survey results that many of the absentee voters, particularly older voters, seemed to have a fear, not necessarily based on personal experience, that something was wrong in the public schools and that old standards are no longer contributing to a high quality of education. Because such an attitude is extremely difficult to change, Calkins cautions that it may not be in the school district's best interests to continue supporting voting by mail. If the trend continues, however, Calkins advises that school boards take special pains to word the language of the proposals in plain English instead of unclear legal terminology.

Disclosure laws can also cause problems in bond issue campaigns. Most states prohibit the use of public school funds for any purpose other than the dissemination of information. George T. Daniel (1985), superintendent of schools in Kent, Washington, points out the importance of following disclosure laws by outlining a personal experience that almost caused an 80 percent supported bond victory in his district to be overturned.

In their informational literature, the school district used the statement, "For less than the cost of a pizza, property owners in the Kent School District can ensure that the current level of education in schools will continue" (Daniel, 1985, p. 27). While most taxpayers would consider the statement a "minor" error, the comment could be construed as asking for support, an activity that must be left to local PTAs or public support groups. A disgruntled patron turned the issue in to the county prosecuting attorney, who referred it to the state's Public Disclosure Commission. The levy was not invalidated, because the committee ruled that the district had not intended to violate the law, but Daniel recommends that district information concerning a bond issue be strictly limited to factual information (i.e., the date of the election, the amount of the levy, the impact of the levy upon the property owner). Promotion simply has to be left to public support campaigning.

Well-organized oppositions are also a problem with which many school officials must contend. According to the SCSBA survey (Henry, 1987), only 37 percent of successful campaigns had an organized opposition, while 100 percent of those that failed faced such a force. Janet Puzey (1986), a school board member from Illinois, described how her school district countered a well-organized, well-respected opposition committee.

The opposition, called the Fair Funding Committee, consisted of 10 families and their supporters. Most were successful, young farmers with school-age children. In the beginning, the group stated that they opposed the tax increase because it was unfair to large land owners and farmers, and that they were not criticizing the board or its management. Unfortunately, that attitude quickly changed.

The first problem with which the school board had to contend was the appropriate use of the media. The opposition wanted a confrontation in front of a large forum, but the board was determined to avoid that type of situation at all costs. They chose, instead, to have volunteers answer questions and inform taxpayers about the issue in small discussion groups held at various settings within the district. The school board was careful not to appear as a total group in public except for regularly-scheduled board meetings. The Fair Funding Committee requested an opportunity to address the board at a regular meeting, and unbeknownst to the school board, the group had notified all local media. When school officials discovered, just prior to the meeting, that the media would be present, they made several phone calls to referendum supporters so that both sides would be in attendance at the meeting. After the Fair Funding Committee's presentation, a former teacher presented a rebuttal. This allowed for equal presentation of the points in the local media. In another media effort, the opposition placed yard signs across from the entrance to the school and along all bus routes in the town. This infuriated older students and probably influenced their parents. Unfortunately, an anonymous group set fire to the signs and the opposition expressed their anger in the media.

Ms. Puzey indicates that timing of campaign events is also an important element in effectively dealing with opposition groups, and she points to the value of having the campaign reach its peak just before the election. The Save Jamaica Support Committee tried to ignore opposition activity and concentrate on work just before the election. They asked volunteers to write articles to give the public the impression that many people supported the referendum program. Mailers were sent on the Friday and Saturday just prior to the election on Tuesday, to allow supporters the "last word."

Such activities point to a third element of dealing with a strong opposition – controlling reactions to attacks by the opposition. Ms. Puzey warns that everyone should be prepared for nastiness both before and after the election. The board and support committee attempted to remain calm and polite throughout the campaign. Whenever possible, they found "common ground" with the opposition. For example, the opposition claimed that if the referendum failed and schools closed, the children would still need to be educated. The support group agreed with this, but identified that the school could not guarantee where the children would go to school. Using this method of dealing with attacks countered the efforts of the opposition without alienating those who might have held some agreement with their committee's positions.

The author suggests that factual information is the most powerful weapon against opposition attacks. For example, in Ms. Puzey's situation the opposition tried to involve local state representatives and use their names. The support group requested written confirmation of the representatives' points of view and presented these to the public. When the opposition talked about mismanagement by the board of education, the board simply shared a very favorable audit report from a reputable local firm. This type of calm, positive reaction seemed to get the point across.

The final key in dealing with a strong opposition is maintenance of board unity throughout the referendum campaign. The vote for the referendum must be unanimous and the board should support their plan throughout the campaign.

Mending fences in the community after a hard-fought campaign is important to maintaining community support. For this reason, no one scheduled celebrations and everyone tried to avoid confrontations after the successful completion of the referendum vote. The success of their efforts is evidenced by the results of the next regular school board election. Four incumbents on the board were opposed by active members of the referendum opposition committee. When the votes were in, the incumbents were re-elected by a large margin. Community conflict was laid to rest further by the board doing exactly what it said it would do throughout the campaign – center their attention of business as usual and high quality educational programs.

A community in Vermont faced an even tougher challenge in dealing with a divided community. Robert V. Carlson (1990), a professor of education at the University of Vermont, presents a case study of a situation that took place in a small town in that state (for purposes of maintaining confidentiality, he called the community Valley View, a pseudonym). The report illustrates the importance of understanding how rural school/community relationships adapt and change under environmental pressure.

Valley View is a community of about 1,200 people. The economic situation was depressed, with limited job opportunities, a high level of unemployment, and families that had been on welfare for several generations. The community lacked a positive self-image and engaged in polarized politics. The situation can best be compared to the "Hatfields and McCoys." The low-cost housing in the community brought new families into the community with a higher level of education, many of whom drove to other communities for employment. They saw the importance of a quality education for their children and began pressing the issue. After difficult disagreements with several elementary principals, which had stressed community relationships, the board of education hired a new female principal who had grown up in the community. At approximately the same time, a group of community members began to quietly organize a bond issue campaign for a new school. The referendum passed by a margin of eight votes. The opposition group called for another election, and this time the decision was reversed by a margin of nine votes. These two events seemed to be the catalyst for change in the community.

Prior to the second election, the governor of Vermont came to the community to share a new proposal for state funding. While the occasion laid some excellent ground work for change, it also postponed education funding needs until after the legislature acted on the proposal.

In the meantime, the pro-bond group was promoting the idea of increasing the school board from three to five members. As a result, two members of the opposition group were elected to the school board, with a third member narrowly defeated. This brought the opposition group into the inner circle and forced them to deal with the problems facing the school district.

The legislature increased funding to schools and reimbursement for indebtedness increased from 20 percent to 60 percent. The governor returned to the community to sign the new state funding legislation.

While these two events were critical in the change process, the actions of the new principal during this period completed the requirements for community change. She worked diligently with staff members and listened to their needs.

The school board also worked diligently to overcome the difficulties that had been troublesome to school-community relations. For example, school busing had been operated through a third-party bus contractor. Frequent breakdowns and numerous delays had caused community concern. To alleviate the problem the school board decided to purchase their own buses. The action gave community members something of which to be proud, and they could see their tax dollars at work every day. This brought a new attitude to the school's staff, which in turn brought a positive movement in relationships between the school and community.

In his analysis of what had happened in this case study, Carlson provides a list of factors and sub-factors that influenced the turn-around in community relations (see Appendix F). He used the "Framework for Analyzing Organizational Behavior'' by Bolman and Deal as the model for organizational theory, a requirement for positive community relationships. The model offers four lenses necessary for analyzing and influencing organizational behavior. The structural lens identified the expansion of the school board, the expansion of the principal's position to a nearly full-time position, and the funding support from the state legislature as structural changes that contributed to the community's turn around.

The human resource lens found a principal who made a high priority of a human resource agenda and made visible commitments to changing areas of concern. The improved involvement of staff in school matters, and related decisions, enforced the human resource contribution to the change process. The political lens identified a well-conceived political strategy that upset the balance of power. By itself, the situation may not have been enough, however, when coupled with the changes in funding from the state level, this lens provided significant impact on community change.

Finally, the symbolic lens found new decisions by the school board contributed to local pride. The school staff's new mission statement of ''quality and equality – excellence for all,'' provided a new view of change, ownership and pride that contributed to community attitude change. Consideration of adjustments in these lenses produced relationships that influenced this community's turn-around and brought new support for expanding educational opportunities.

Jerrold M. Peterson, in his 1990 working paper, entitled ''The Economics of the 1990 Duluth School Bond Issue,'' also offers a method for dealing with a strong opposition. The $35.8 million bond issue proposed consolidating and replacing seven obsolete buildings with five new buildings and the renovation of two outmoded buildings. Those in opposition argued that the proposal was beyond the ability of taxpayers to fund, and that the new debt would have a negative effect on the present and future business community.

To address these concerns, Peterson examined the benefits that would occur if the bond issue passed, the ability of the community to deal with the potential debt, and the actual affect of the proposal on the business community. The total cost of principle and interest through 2010 totaled $66.4 million. If national construction costs over the last 10 years averaged an increase of 4.87 percent per year, every year the project was postponed, costs would increase by that amount. To delay meant either increasing the total debt or decreasing the size and quality of the proposed structures.

To deal with the arguments of the opposition, whose position centered on the additional tax burden without dealing with the benefits to be gained from improved education, Peterson used the human capital theory to estimate the benefits of increased educational spending on the potential productivity of the present generation of school children. Although the author believes that human values should be the most important consideration, his calculations dealt mostly with income levels.

Using the lifetime income of an average 25-year-old citizen, he estimated the investment value at $108,793 per year for each child. A crude time allocation model reviewed the school's contribution to the productivity of students ages 6–18. This calculation produced an 18 percent productivity contribution; however, to be conservative, the author used 12.4 percent as the annual increase. Therefore, the school district added $13,490 to the productive capacity of each of its average students. Peterson emphasizes that most of the productivity comes from quality teaching, which requires an investment in capital equipment. The school district was operating with undersized, obsolete capital equipment and buildings, of which the average year of construction was 1941. By providing better classroom opportunities, more appropriate equipment, and better traffic flow patterns, Peterson calculated that productivity would increase by 7.48 percent per year if the new plan was adopted. The expanded economic opportunity for children would be $1,006.57 per student; the total economic benefit for students was $8,776,734. The annual rate of return on the initial investment of $35.8 million could therefore be estimated at 25 percent.

The school district then identified the groups that represented the greatest opposition to the bond issue. The first group consisted of members of the business community who owned or rented a large amount of real estate. They believed that they would be unfairly burdened by the new taxes. The second group comprised many of the senior citizens in the community, who believed a raise in taxes would overburden their fixed incomes. Peterson attempted to answer these concerns by first calculating whether or not the business property owners could afford this bond issue. He compared the per capita income, local government revenue, school expenditures, and per capita debt borne by taxpayers in various counties of Minnesota. Without the new bond debt, Duluth taxpayers were paying significantly less taxes than the national average; however, their tax burden was about equal with the state average. If the bond issue passed, the per capita debt in Duluth would be increased to $2,048. While Peterson admitted that the increase was significant; he pointed out that the actual increase, per capita, devoted to education expenditures would increase from 5.27 percent to 5.67 percent ($571-$609) and that the 35 points were not an alarming increase. He asked taxpayers to note that the percentage of per capita income devoted to education would remain constant if the per capita income were increased by 6.6 percent. He then pointed out that from 1986 to 1987 the per capita income had increased an estimated 8.49 percent and from 1987 to 1988 had increased 4.26 percent. Therefore, the community's per capita income had already increased enough to cover the proposed additional tax burden, without increasing the percentage of income for education.

Peterson also calculated the effect of businesses passing on their increased tax burden to customers and renters. His results indicated that business persons could shoulder their share of the burden without significantly altering their business activities.

To deal with the opposition from senior citizens, Peterson reminded them of the foresight of their grandparents. He calculated that a current senior citizen (age 62) would have been 12 years old when the existing facilities were constructed in 1940. He then pointed out that the value of these 1940 schools in 1990 dollars was $80,800,000. The burden of their futures had been paid for by citizens who had worked hard through World War I, the Roaring Twenties, and the Great Depression; their futures had been guaranteed by people who were willing to sacrifice for the good of their communities. Based on these calculations, Peterson's working paper indicates that Duluth could afford to build the proposed schools and fund the required bond payments.

The periodical literature offers a considerable amount of advice for establishing needs, prioritizing needs, identifying community perceptions, organizing and implementing a successful campaign, confronting special problems and managing a follow-up program of good financial management. Philip J. Dorweiler and Edgar H. Bittle (1992), in their article the "Anatomy of a School Bond Issue," offer one final bit of advice that all would probably do well to heed. They point to the need for most school districts to hire professionals, such as financial consultants, architects and bond consultants, to assist them in the process. Few individuals within a school system hold uncommon expertise in these areas, and a failure to follow all the necessary steps can have potentially serious consequences. They contend, however, that establishing a close relationship with these professionals can increase the probability that the bond issue will be approved by the voters, accepted by the bond market, and that the school district will receive the funds it needs to meet the educational needs of its children.

Dissertations

Most of the dissertations completed around the topic of school bond elections are studies of the various factors that have an impact on the success or failure of school bond elections. Prentice L. Gott (1962) compared the impact of selected factors on both the success and failure of school bond issue campaigns in 20 selected Kentucky school districts.

Gott actually found few significant differences between successful and unsuccessful districts. The two groups differed only slightly in the methods of releasing information, the use of media for communications, the use of an advisory committee, the contributions of lay and professional groups and the types of sub-committees utilized. Both groups used curriculum planning, financial planning, evaluation of instructions , and a school building committees to design and carry out the bond issue campaign. The study also failed to identify any correlation between the results of a sample poll and the outcome of the actual election. No significant differences were identified between the two groups in the use of an advisory committee or in the design of the community relations programs (successful districts, however, utilized slightly more committees in their campaigns). The study did not find that the length of planning time for the campaign and the length of notification prior to the announcement of the need for an increase tax levy did not have a significant impact on the results of the elections. The author did not find any significant difference in school board support between the two groups. In fact, 100 percent of the board members of each district had voted on whether or not to initiate a bond campaign, and only two of the 102 voted against having a campaign. (Three unsuccessful districts did report having board members who were actively opposed to the campaign; however the number of cases was not sufficient for analysis.)

One of the differences that Gott did find was that Kentucky school districts that had utilized a specific director for community relations experienced significantly more success in passing school bond elections than did those that did not name a director. Most of these directors were central office personnel who spent a small part of their time on this assignment. Usually a small allocation of dollars for the service had to be approved, but the study found that budgetary allowances in this area were not significant factors.

The Kentucky study found no significant difference between the two groups in terms of location of the proposed facility, construction near areas of population growth, the survey of educational needs prior to the campaign, the loss of students to private schools or the ratio of total adults to number of public school students. The research did identify that a loss in the population of 21-45 year olds could spell defeat for a campaign, but it did not indicate that a gain in the number of people within that age group created a successful campaign.

Gott also identifies the presence of organized opposition as a significant factor in bond issue campaigns. Fifty percent of the unsuccessful school districts studied identified opposition groups. Two prominent groups included large property owners and citizens opposed to the consolidation of small schools. These groups cited their main opposition was to increased taxation and the need for maintaining small, community high schools.

Another factor that seemed to have a significant impact on the outcome of the election was support of the city council or fiscal court. Successful districts also dramatically increased their use of the media by 38 percent, while unsuccessful districts increased their usage by only three percent. As well, those districts that were experiencing a large increase in the number of students were more successful. Unfortunately, the study also found that school districts that conducted unsuccessful campaigns were still not successful in future attempts.

In a similar study, Russell J. Crider (1967), in his dissertation at the University of Southern Mississippi, investigated the influence of selected factors on the success or failure of school bond elections in 15 county unit districts that had held successful elections and 15 county unit districts that had experienced failures between 1959 and 1965.

The results of the investigation indicate the presence of operative factors that influence the success or failure of school bond elections. Crider reports that county boards of supervisors exert far too much influence on schools. School districts that failed to pass bond elections had county boards of education that were too politically involved with interests other than children. He also reports that the leadership of the county superintendent of education is a critical factor in dealing with political and social interests in a positive manner to bring about support for the bond issue.

The study showed only one factor of the campaign that seemed to affect outcomes. Districts that suffered defeats offered public relations programs that were unorganized, inadequate and of little good, in that they relied more on the emotional aspects of the issue than on providing quality information about the benefits to children.

Charles P. McDaniel, Jr. (1967), in his study at the University of Georgia, also found a definable cluster of conditions and processes that appear in most successful bond elections. First, all activities were carefully planned and closely coordinated through an organizational structure of defined responsibilities. Second, successful districts sought the advice of influential people and placed them in positions of leadership for the campaign. Successful campaign plans instilled a sense of ownership for the proposed facilities. Voters in districts that pass bond issues generally have confidence in the administration, and must believe that the entire school board is supportive of the issue. All segments of the population were included in the planning and pre-election campaign. All factual information concerning the project was shared openly during public presentations. Those school districts that won usually had a continuing public relations program that kept the public informed of the financial conditions of the district, school activities and programs, and projected plans for the future. Many also carried out an evaluation procedure of each step in the campaign.

Another study in Georgia by Tom N. Puliam (1983) used statistical analysis to identify differences between successful and unsuccessful school bond elections. In this study, discriminate analysis was identified as a statistical technique to classify the factors influencing bond issues into the mutually exclusive categories of successful or unsuccessful bond elections based on characteristics occurring during a particular observation. Pulliam determined that the variables used in this study contributed to the discriminant function, which identified differences between success and failure in school bond elections. Those variables included a continuous public relations program, an increasing student enrollment, leadership by lay citizens, involvement of school personnel, support of school board members, use of students in the campaign, percentage of schools improved, mass communications media used, and a special election ballot.

The author developed a discriminant function equation, which predicted with reasonable reliability whether or not a bond issue would pass. Use of this discriminant function predicted the outcome of 78.95 percent of the bond issues studied in this dissertation. Of the 107 bond issues studied by Pulliam, 68 (63.55%) of the districts experienced successful campaigns.

Conclusions from this study ranked those factors which contributed to the discriminant function. The level at which school personnel participated in the bond issue campaign ranked first in its contribution to the discriminant function, in opposition to much of what is in the literature. Other factors that ranked in the first nine included an increase in pupil enrollment, contributions of lay citizens in the campaign, support of school board members, and use of students in the bond issue campaign. The month of the year in which the election took place was identified as having no significant difference in a school bond campaign.

Holly W. Mitchell, Jr. (1962) also studied the factors that affected the outcome of school bond elections. His research focused on a survey of 137 Missouri public schools. From the surveys, Mitchell identified factors that schools reported as having an impact on bond issue elections. They include:

1) A special school bond election should be presented to the voting public during the regular school term;
2) School districts should avoid holding elections during holiday seasons or tax-paying times;
3) A comprehensive public relations program must be developed and shared with the public;
4) Bond issue campaigns must be designed to meet the unique needs of a particular community;

5) Community participation has a significant impact on school bond elections;
6) Community support groups must pay close attention to identifiable factors affecting the outcome of a bond election in the particular community;
7) Community support groups must direct their attention to thoroughly informing the public of all the needs and requirements, if support of a long-term debt is anticipated;
8) School bond issues in Missouri appear to meet more resistance than nationally known.

From these findings, Mitchell makes the following recommendations. First, the voting date should be set at a special election during the school year. Legal restrictions must be liberalized on school bonds in Missouri. Comprehensive surveys identifying the requirements of the educational program must be identified as the central theme in a school bond campaign. The author also recommends that school officials utilize the professional resources available in carrying out the school bond campaign. Local citizens must be involved in all phases of the program, and efforts must be made to inform all citizens about the issue. Finally, the school district needs to have a well-designed and continuous public relations program.

Michael L. Ough (1991), in his dissertation at the University of Nebraska, attempted to determine if a relationship existed between selected factors in school bond elections in Nebraska between September 1, 1979 and August 31, 1989. Ough identified seven factors as having statistical significance.

The author found that a combination of no district reorganization, a low enrollment of private school students, light voter turnout, and a low property tax levy was important in school bond issue passage. The potential for success was also improved by a small bond issue amount, an active citizens committee, and an increase in student enrollments in the previous five years.

Ough found that valuation per resident student, the unemployment rate in the county, the percentage of change in the consumer price index, the amount of square footage per student, the month of the election, the number of times the proposal had been attempted, and total school enrollment had no statistically significant correlation with the number of positive votes in Nebraska bond election campaigns.

John D. Kennedy (1971), in a study at Georgia State University, reviewed variables affecting the success or failure of bond issues and the effects educational accountability have on the results. He found that voters wanted a voice in the decision-making processes of schools, and that educators who ignored these demands created unsuccessful bond issue campaigns. He also found that voters want to know why the money is needed and on what it will be spent. Respondents indicated that requests directly related to some expected pupil outcome receive a higher level of support. The results remind school boards to eliminate racially discriminatory practices. In addition, boards must show themselves as temperamentally, intellectually, and morally competent to provide direction for educational programs. School boards must restrict their role in developing school policy to reviewing and approving system plans, reviewing evaluation data, and developing policy as needed.

Some of the dissertations studied specific variables to determine their impact on the results of school bond elections. John L. Ashe (1959), in a dissertation at the University of Arizona, found that a substantial number of school districts use the services of a fiscal agent. Returns indicated that 62 districts out of 96 reporting, utilized these services (64.5%). Districts identified two reasons for employing fiscal agents: their own personal experience in bond elections and the experiences of other school districts who utilized these services. School districts also indicated that they based their decision to employ such an individual because of recommendations by state departments of education and bond attorneys.

Thirty-nine out of 52 reported that the fiscal agents were selected on the basis of professional competence and that the agents provided the following services: advertising of bonds for sale, advice regarding dates of the election and bond sales, and the preparation and distribution of the bond prospectus. The reports indicate that the fiscal agent's fee is, in most cases, paid out of the proceeds of the bond sale.

Much of the literature identifies the importance of community committees in providing input for bond issue campaigns. A study by Edward J. Farley (1967) attempted to identify the numbers of the power structure serving on a bond issue committee in a suburban community in Massachusetts. The study also investigated the options these individuals have during an election campaign and the influence these numbers have on the opinions of voters. The power structure of the school under study consisted of 21 members, most of whom were members of power structures in other areas of the community. Although the individuals were not highly effective political agents, they were better educated, had higher incomes, and had lived in the community longer than a majority of registered voters in the district.

The study indicated that members of parent-teacher groups in the community were most interested in the opinions of the power structure committee members who were school personnel. "Yes" voters identified the pressing need for a new school. The opposition based their votes on the fear of increasing the tax rate. Individuals voting in favor of the referendum were: members of parent-teacher groups, came from high-income families, generally had children attending the public schools, and were new residents to the community. Opposition came from younger voters, those educated in parochial schools, voters with children attending parochial schools, and those with no children in school.

The superintendent of schools was the most influential committee member. The study indicated that new residents and those with higher levels of education were the voters most interested in the opinions expressed by members of the community input committee.

Ronald R. Rowe (1971) conducted his study to determine what factors in terms of communication of information influenced voters' decisions in his study of voters in an election in the San Dieguito Union High School District on February 3, 1970. He also studied voter perceptions as they related to passage.

Rowe found that school-voter communication, voter understanding of the proposal, and information sources affected the voter response. The results indicated that both positive and negative voters believed the newspaper, particularly the local newspaper, was the most respected source of school-related information. Voters also relied upon students, parents and school employees. Newspaper articles were not identified by voters as part of the district's public relations program, and many complained that the school district did not provide realistic or adequate two-way channels of communication. Many also criticized the district for an inadequate public information program, especially after the election. The author also found that many in the district felt uninformed. Parents of younger children believed they were not well informed about the district's needs, so most of the parental support came from the parents of high school students. The study also revealed that while most voters understood the basic problems of overcrowding and lack of space, less than one-fifth of the voters saw overcrowding as a major problem area.

Supporters of the issue were largely parents of students, voters who had lived in the district less than five years, and housewives. Those voting against included retired citizens and voters living in the district for more than five years. This group identified taxes, poor use of funds, and overexpenditure for education as their reasons for voting "no" on the proposal.

Other research attempts to look at the overall characteristics of a school district as indicators of potential success on bond issue referenda. Conrad H. Dean (1972) conducted such a study while at Kansas State University. He studied the characteristics of districts having successful and unsuccessful bond elections to determine the predictability of success based on quantitative factors.

The author concluded that successful districts are smaller in area, but have larger student populations, had higher assessed valuations per pupil and received more state aid. He indicates, however, that while success at the polls could not be predicted by studying only quantitative factors, such analysis was superior to the predictive ability obtained from only subjective factors.

Unfortunately for school districts, the variables identified in this study are out of the control of school boards and administrators, and that the results of these variables are less than helpful in planning bond issue campaigns. From his analysis, he believes that a combination of quantitative and qualitative variables are present in school bond issue elections and that a year-by-year analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data is necessary for planning a successful campaign.

Donald C. Nelson (1973) investigated the effects of marketing practices and net interest costs on school bond issues in Nebraska. He concluded that the marketability of Nebraska school bond issues was below the national bond average. It appears that school district officials and legislators can influence the net interest costs of school bonds by improving marketing procedures and amending statutory provisions.

To accomplish this, school officials need to improve their understanding of bond marketing and rating procedures, long-term planning to ensure a bond maturity schedule that will afford shorter term of issuance. Administrators also need to learn how to provide a better prospectus to potential buyers. Results indicate than an improved savings in net interest costs can be obtained if districts use competitive bidding procedures instead of sales by negotiation.

Districts can predict these costs by utilizing accurate data on the term of issue, size of the issue, the debt ratio of the district, and the present mill levy asked by the district. Results indicate that taxpayers and school officials are not always aware of the true net issue cost in a bond issue. Nelson believes that marketability of bonds would increase if the state legislature would guarantee principle and interest payments.

Review

Most of the literature reviewed in this chapter attempted to identify factors that contribute to the success of school bond elections in various regions of the United States. A knowledge of those factors found to be important is key to planning, implementing, and concluding a successful school bond issue campaign.

The most significant factor identified in the review of literature was clearly the development of a citizens volunteer group to serve as the leadership for support in a bond issue campaign. Gott (1962), Mitchell (1962), Farley (1962), McDaniel (1963), Crosswait (1967), Kennedy (1971), Rowe (1971), Ross (1983), Hamel (1984), Barney (1984), Taylor (1984), Houston (1985), Surratt (1987), Chopra (1988), Swalm (1989), Krop (1989), Conyers and Francl (1989), Graham and others (1990), Greig (1990), Peterson (1990), Carlson (1990), and Herman (1991) all point to the activities of these committees as one of the essential elements in their successful school bond elections. They also indicate that such committees must be broad-based, with as many segments of the community as possible being represented.

Gott (1962), Mitchell (1962), Ross (1983), and Hamel (1984) also stress the importance of a school district community relations program that functions as a regular part of school district services. Other important public relations activities pointed to in the literature include: video tapes demonstrating the needs of the school (Conyers & Francl, 1989; Taylor, 1984), a speakers bureau (Taylor, 1984; Surratt, 1987), and special measures to involve senior citizens (Conyer & Francl, 1989; Krop, 1989).

Another critical factor outlined by several authors was the need for gathering adequate information about the attitudes of the community. Romanik (1987) reported that a telephone survey was an effective method of gaining such data, and Graham and others (1990) advised the use of marketing techniques to determine the target audience and the type of information they needed. Seeing that the appropriate information reaches the public is also critical. Ashe (1959), Mitchell (1962), Crosswait (1967), Nelson (1973), Herman (1991), and Dorweiler and Bittle (1992) all discuss the importance of hiring and utilizing consultants in areas of school planning and finance. Architecture and bonds can be important to providing the appropriate information and good planning to the voting public.

Staff and Board of Education unity were important factors outlined by McDaniel (1967), Puzey (1986), Surratt (1987), and Graham et al. (1990), and Krop (1989). Additionally, Crosswait (1967) and Henry (1987) advocate pursuing a high voter turn out as a factor in victory. However, Calkins (1986) warns against relying upon absentee voters as a means of increasing voter participation.

Many authors indicated that the endorsement of influential community figures also helped school bond election campaigns (e.g., Taylor, 1984; Surratt, 1987; Conyer & Francl, 1989). Crider (1967) found that involvement of political figures, except city councils, did not increase the potential for winning school bond elections.

While different authors suggest that timing of both the campaigns and the date of election are important, they often disagree as to what those conditions should be. Crosswait (1967), for example, indicates that the timing of the election date is not a factor in success or failure. On the other hand, Mitchell (1962) believes that school bond elections should be held only during the school term. Ross (1983) recommends that the campaign start at least one year prior to the election; while Conyers and Francl (1989) recommend that referendum campaigning not last longer than 30 days.

Some of the literature is specific in terms of dealing with problems faced by individual school districts. The presence of a strong, organized opposition group is identified by Puzey (1986) and Henry (1987) as a factor in most school bond elections that fail. Gott (1962) identifies other factors, most out of the control of administrators and boards of education, that have a negative impact on election campaigns—size of school district, amount of tax increase, etc.

The review of literature provided important indications of those factors which might be expected to affect the outcomes of school bond elections in South Dakota. The information provided in these studies and reports was the foundation for the survey questions used in an exploratory data analysis of selected school districts in South Dakota.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

Introduction

This study explores and compares those factors that contributed to the success or failure of bond elections in four selected school districts in South Dakota. The specific research questions to be answered include:

1. What factors contributed to the success of school bond issues in two selected school districts?
2. What factors contributed to the failure of school bond issues in two selected school districts?
3. What relationship exists among the factors with regard to selected characteristics of the school districts?

Population

The criterion used for selection of the subject school districts was the median school district size in the United States – 2,917 pupils (Jewel, 1989). Of the 179 school districts in South Dakota, 11 districts have school populations that fall within 836 students of the median number. Of the 11, five had conducted school bond issue campaigns recently. The two successful and two unsuccessful school districts closest in size were chosen as the subject school districts. The districts have school populations of 2,862, 2,820, 2,737, and 2,081 (South Dakota Department of Education and Cultural Affairs, 1991).

Instrumentation

Procedures for the study followed the exploratory data analysis created by Tukey (1971). This analysis requires instrumentation that allows the researcher to obtain both basic information about the subject schools and critical information about the relationship among variables within an isolated case that might have more universal applicability. (See Appendix B for a complete description.) Because of his personal experiences in school bond elections, the researcher was able to ask questions and evaluate responses to gain this second level of information. Interviews, containing both structured and non-structured portions, were used to obtain this information. Questions were developed based on the researcher's personal experiences and on issues raised in the relevant literature.

Four individuals in each of the four communities were interviewed for the study: the superintendent of schools, a member of the citizens support committee, the editor of the local newspaper, and a local banker. These individuals were selected because they have first-hand knowledge of the required information and first-hand experiences with the internal and external factors that affect the results of bond issue campaigns. A letter seeking the cooperation of the superintendent of each school district was sent (See Appendix D).

Each participant was asked questions pertaining to his or her particular area of expertise in addition to the questions about their general perceptions of the campaign. Superintendents were asked a variety of questions dealing with financial and school information available only through the school records. Citizens committee representatives were asked to outline specific activities taken on by the committee. The newspaper editor was asked about the types of coverage given and the types of letters received. The banker was asked questions about the economic climate within the community at the time of the election. Each interview lasted about 20 minutes. (See Appendix E for complete scripts of interviews.)

Data Collection

The superintendent of schools in each of the four participating school districts identified the other individuals in the community who would take part in the study and scheduled times for interviews with each. Each interview was planned to last about 20 minutes, but that time frame was expanded in cases when it was necessary to get a clearer understanding of the second layer of information. Responses were hand recorded by the researcher. Print materials, newspaper editorials, letters to the editor, buttons, and other program materials used in the campaign were also gathered. (See Appendix F for a representative sample.)

Exploration of Data

After the data were obtained, the researcher identified similarities and differences among responses given by individuals in each school district and among the four school districts. An exploratory analysis was then done to identify those factors that affected both successful and unsuccessful bond issue campaigns. The data were then analyzed to identify those factors that were different for successful and unsuccessful campaigns.

Understanding the factors that affect the outcomes of school bond issue elections in South Dakota should be of great assistance to individuals engaged in planning campaigns for such issues. Therefore, the information obtained in this study will become an important tool for administrators across the state.

CHAPTER 4

Findings

The average age of school buildings currently in use in the United States is clear evidence of the difficulty of passing school bond issues for new facilities. The American Association of School Administrators (AASA) reports that one-eighth of the public schools in this country are inadequate to meet the needs of new educational reforms (Zachariya, 1991). The situation is even more severe in South Dakota, where, according to the Department of Education and Cultural Affairs, one-half of the public school buildings have outlived their usefulness (''Aging School Buildings,'' 1991).

School administrators are increasingly being forced to ask taxpayers to fund building and renovation projects to deal with this problem. Such measures are difficult to pass in any community, but the problem is exacerbated in states, such as South Dakota, that require a 60 percent approval margin. The task of providing quality educational opportunities to their students, is, therefore, a significant challenge to school administrators. Unfortunately, at present, few school officials are adequately trained in the techniques necessary for developing a successful, community-wide election campaign.

This study explored those factors contributing to the success or failure of bond elections in four selected school districts in South Dakota. Exploratory data analysis (Borg & Gall, 1989) was utilized to answer the following three research questions:

1. What specific variables contributed to the success of school bond elections in two selected school districts?
2. What specific variables contributed to the failure of school bond elections in two selected school districts?
3. What specific variables can be identified with regard to selected characteristics of the school districts?

Using selected items from his own experience and from the related literature, the researcher used a structured interview to gather demographic data from the superintendent of schools, a member of the citizens committee (School District C requested interviews with two members of the citizens committee so that information could be provided on all aspects of the committee's activities), a newspaper editor, and a banker from each of the selected communites. An unstructured portion of the interview allowed the interviewees to identify factors they believed were unique to their particular bond election campaign. Findings from these interviews are reported under the following subtopics: Structured Demographic Data, Unstructured Perception Data, and Summary. During both the structured and unstructured portions of the interview, respondents were asked to identify items of critical impact (i.e., those factors they believe most affected the results of their particular bond election). Knowledge of the experiences of the interviewees provides the rudiments for designing a successful school bond campaign strategy.

Structured Demographic Data

Demographic data obtained from the structured section of the superintendent's interview are summarized in Table 1. Both consistencies and differences among the four school districts were found in the demographic data. School districts A and B were successful; school districts C and D were unsuccessful.

School District A asked for $4.85 million and received an approval of 76.6 percent from the voters. Although one board member was absent at the time of the authorization, all five board members were supportive of the bond election. This was the district's first attempt at this bond issue, and the school district utilized the guidance of a bond consultant and public relations consultant in its campaign. The district also hired an architectural firm seven and one-half months before the election to design the 87,056-square foot building included in the project. The district used capital outlay dollars to

Table 1

Structured Superintendent's Demographic Data

	Successful		Unsuccessful	
	School A	School B	School C	School D
# of Dollars	4.85 m	6.35 m	8.9m*	6.995m
# of Yes Votes	2,451	1,341	1,594	1,708
# of No votes	747	703	1,999	1,485
% of Support	76.6%	65.6%	44.35%	53.49%
% of Voter Turnout	40%	36.21%	36.01%	35.56%
Attempt #	First	First	First*	Second
Board Vote	4-0 (one member missing but supportive)	5-0*	4-1*	5-0
Date of Vote	12/10/85*	10/9/90	11/12/91	6/26/90
Used Bond Consult.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Months architect hired prior	7.5	4	4	0
Other Consultant	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
# of Sq. Ft.	87,056	96.220	119,000	130,000
$ per $1000 valuation	$1.72	$2.04	$2.31	$2.47*
Other Financing	Capital Outlay	No	No	No

*Critical Impact

hold the amount of the bond issue at a lower level, with the request representing a raise in the levy of $1.72 per one thousand dollars of valuation. The superintendent identified the date of the election (12/10/85) as a factor of critical impact in the election. The community had recently experienced a rather lengthy bond campaign for community facilities, and the superintendent believes the identification of the school's improvement needs was better understood by community voters. This, combined with the preholiday "spirit of giving," made the election date important.

School District B asked voters for $6.35 million and the bond issue was approved by a 65.6 percent of the voters. The school board was unified in its support for taking this vote to the people and experienced success on the first attempt. The 96,220 square foot facility required a levy increase of $2.04 per one thousand dollars valuation. The district used no other form of financing, and hired the architect four months prior to the election. A bond consultant was utilized for guidance in the campaign. The superintendent of schools identified the 5-0 unified board of education vote as an item of critical impact on the bond election campaign.

School District C experienced an unsuccessful first attempt by obtaining 44.35 percent voter approval. The board asked the voters to approve an $8.9 million facility, requiring a levy increase of $2.31 per one thousand dollars valuation. No other forms of finance were utilized for the 119,000 square foot facility. Voter turnout for the election was 36.01 percent. This was not an unusual number; the four schools all experienced voter turnouts between 35.56 percent and 40 percent of the registered voters. The district hired their architect four months prior to the election and used both a bond consultant and public relations consultant for guidance in their campaign. The superintendent of schools identified the 4-1 authorization vote by the board of education as a factor of critical impact. The cost of the project and the amount of the levy increase were also identified as items of critical impact. It was also a first attempt. Community input indicated that future election attempts should provide a more realistic and cost-effective school building.

School District D, in the second election on the issue within the year, asked voters for $6.995 million for a 13,000 square foot facility package. The issue required a levy increase of $2.47 per one thousand dollars valuation. Although the board of education unanimously supported the bond proposal, only 53.49 percent of the voters supported the project; therefore, even though a majority within the school district approved the measure, the issue failed to meet the 60 percent requirement imposed by South Dakota law. The superintendent of schools identified the amount of the tax increase as an item of critical impact to the voters. The district did not hire an architect prior to this election, but utilized both a bond consultant and a building design consultant in their campaign efforts.

Table 2 shows the responses to questions asked of all interviewees in the structured portions of the interviews. While most of the responses were the same for all four school districts, some notable exceptions did exist.

The responses indicate that the study participants were not totally aware of all the intricacies of their own campaign strategies. On several occasions the interviewee did not know how other divisions of the campaign strategy operated. The superintendents seemed to understand the total design; however, they were unaware of some efforts or contributions made by support groups. For example, while School District A was very unified in most of their reponses, they did vary concerning the door-to-door canvas of the community. The superintendent and banker responded that a door-to-door campaign had not been utilized, but the newspaper representative and the citizens-committee member stated that the activity had occurred. In fact, the community representative identified this activity as an item of critical impact, and two representatives from School District A identified the work of the supportive citizens committee as an item of critical impact on the result of the election.

The two winning school districts did not have a community group opposing the bond issue campaign, a condition that was judged as critical to the success of the bond issue by a representative of each school district. Those school districts that lost the bond issue, however, were both faced with community groups that oppossed the bond issue. Interestingly, this activity was unknown to some of the representatives of those schools. For example, School District D showed a real difference on this issue. The superintendent and newspaper person were unaware of an opposition group working in the community; however, the citizens-committee member and the banker identified this opposition group as a critical impact factor on the negative results.

All four school districts utilized a telephone campaign, but only School District A utilized a poll watcher. School District A's superintendent identified

Table 2

Structured Common Questions

School-Posit	Facility	Gym	Pro Group	Con Group	Telephone Campaign	Door-to-Door	Poll Watcher	Public Meets
A S	Elem. Schl.	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes*	Yes
A C	Elem. Schls.	Yes	Yes*	No	Yes	Yes*	Yes	Yes*
A N	Elem. Schls.	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	NA
A B	Elem. Schls.	Yes	Yes*	No*	Yes	No	Don't Know	Yes*
B S	Mid. Schl.*	Yes	Yes	No*	Yes	No	No	Yes*
B C	Mid. Schl.	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
B N	Mid. Schl.	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	NA
B B	Mid. Schl.	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Don't Know	Yes
C S	Mid. Schls.	Yes	Yes	Yes*	Yes	No	No	Yes*
C C	Mid. Schl.	Yes	Yes*	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
C CA	Mid. Schl.	Yes	Yes	Behind scenes*	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
C N	Mid. Schl.	Yes	Yes	Yes*	No	Not aware of	No	NA
C B	Mid. Schl .	Yes	Yes	Yes*	Don't Know	No	Don't Know	Yes
D S	2 Elm. Schls.	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
D C	2 Elm. Schls.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Don' t Know	Yes
D N	2 Elm. Schls.	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	NA
D B	2 Elm. Schls.	Yes	Yes*	Yes*	Yes	Yes	No	Yes

Schools A & B = Successful Campaigns
Schools C & D = Unsuccessful Campaigns
*Critical Impact

S = Superintendent
C = Citizens Committee Member

N = Newspaper Editor
B = Banker

this as a critical factor. All four districts utilized public meetings, and two representatives from School District A and one representative from each School District B and School District C identified public meetings as a critical factor.

Table 3 reveals that the bankers from communities A and C had been consulted by constituents on the financing feasibility of the bond issue; however, communities B and D requested no consultive services from the bankers. None of the bankers identified consultive services as a factor of critical impact.

Table 3

Structured Banker Data

	A	B	C	D
Consulted on Feasibility	Yes	No	Yes	No

*Items of Critical Impact

Data obtained from the four newspaper representatives (Table 4) reveal consistent responses from them to the structured questions. All four school districts had letters to the editor supporting the bond issue, but only School District A identified it as an item of critical impact. All the editors had written articles supporting the bond issue. Only community B did not have letters opposing the bond issue. Letters of support emphasized the need for the new school facility (a critical impact in School District A), the contributions of previous generations in supporting existing facilities, and levels of growth (a critical impact in School District B). The two unsuccessful districts identified educational philosophy, overcrowding, lack of space, and outdated facilities as themes for letters of support. Letters of opposition centered around tax increases, reassessment, and the effects of a state tax freeze.

A summary of the data obtained from the structured questions presented

Table 4
Structured Newspaper Data

Schools	A	B	C	D
Letters supporting bond issue	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Major reason for support	Need* Previous generation built existing buildings	Growth*	Ed. Philosophy Over-crowding	Lack of space Out-dated facilities
Letters opposing bond issue	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Major reason for opposition	Taxes	No	Too much money Tax freeze reassessment	Property tax increase*
Editorial by newspaper/ bond issue	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Editorial position on bond issue	Support	Support	Support	Support
*Items of Critical Impact				

to members of the citizens committee is found in Table 5. The representatives became members of their citizens committees in various ways. The representative from School District A had appeared before the board supporting the need for a bond issue for new facilities and was, therefore, asked to serve on the committee (judged a critical impact factor in School District A); others were either already active in lay work for the schools, were asked by the superintendent to serve or were hired as PR consultants.

Only the representative from School District A judged the work of the citizens committee as having a critical impact on the election. This committee identified needs, promoted the bond issue, conducted fund raising, designed

Table 5

Structured Citizens Data

	Schools				
	A	B	C	CA	D
How Selected	Appeared before the board supporting bond issue needs*	Asked by the Superintendent	Hired as PR person	Parent of HS student	Head of local PTA group
Committee Membership	26 from all segments of the community*	Equal numbers of teachers and community members, Supt. of schools, 1 *businessman, wife of county commissioner	2 parents, 2 citizens (no students), 12 community people, 3 administrators, 1 bd. member	Same as C	Business people, school leaders, parents, teachers, community leaders, college staff
Activities Utilized	Identified needs, promoted bond issue, fundraising*, publicity, speakers bureau, canvass, poll watching, developed program, senior-citizen contact, brochure design, developed theme	Reviewed needs, had site space, reviewed efficiency of sharing with HS, looked at other facilities, majority recommendation	Bldg. tours, 25 club meetings, 2 news conferences, mailed pamphlet to everyone, 3 public meetings, radio talk shows, flyers, posters, advertising, canvass & telephone	Same as C	Public meetings, door-to-door with brochures, radio, program for PTA & school meetings, print material, newspapers
Method for Determining Activities	Used sub-committee chairpersons at weekly meeting to focus on needs	Supt. provided agenda outline	Brain-storming, PR consultant, agenda	Guidance from Supt., bond consultant, and committee members	Brain-storming, advice from bond consultant
Method of Fund Raising	Asked businesses, PTA and citizens.* If money contributed a "Yes" vote	NA	Fund raising committee (minimal response)	Same as C	Fund raising letters sent to selected people

*Critical Impact

publicity, created a speakers bureau, canvassed the community, utilized poll watching to ensure "yes" voters arrived at the polls, developed programs for senior citizen contact, and developed a slogan centered on children. They also utilized sub-committee chairpersons to focus on needs on a step-by-step basis throughout the campaign. The group also asked businesses, the Parent Teacher Association, and individual citizens to contribute money to the campaign. Although the procedure for identifying and encouraging "yes" votes was expensive, it was judged to have had a critical impact on the successful conclusion of this bond issue campaign.

The citizens committe from School District B comprised an equal number of teachers and community members, along with the superintendent of schools, one business person, and the wife of a county commissioner. This group reviewed needs identified by the school staff and identified the efficiency of sharing the middle school facility on the same site as the high school. The committee looked at other facilities in the community; however, based on a majority vote, they recommended to the board of education the construction of a new middle school. The activities of the committee were obtained from an outline provided on their agenda by the superintendent of schools. No fund raising was utilized in this campaign.

The two representatives from the citizens committee in School District C were selected for different reasons. The first respondent was hired as a public relations consultant; the second individual was selected as the parent of a high school student. The citizens committee was made up of two parents, two citizens with no children, twelve community people, three school administrators, and one school board member. The group conducted building tours to inform the community of the needs that existed in the present facilities. Twenty-five meetings were held at various clubs and organizations throughout the community. Two news conferences were also held. Committee members mailed pamphlets to everyone in the community and held three public question-and-answer meetings. Members also spoke on radio talk shows. The marketing design included flyers, posters, advertising, a door-to-door canvas, and a telephone campaign. The superintenadent and bond consultant guided the activities of the committee. The committee attempted a fund-raising drive, but obtained only minimal response.

School District D selected their representative from the committee based on the individual's leadership in the local PTA. Business leaders, school leaders, parents, teachers, civic leaders, and college staff members made up the committee. The group held public meetings, distributed brochures during a door-to-door canvass of the community, spoke on the radio, and developed programs for PTA and school meetings. They also utilized a variety of print materials and articles in the newspaper in their strategy. The methods to be used were gleaned from brainstorming sessions among school and community committee members and advice of the district's bond consultant. Funds to support the efforts of this committee were obtained from request letters sent to selected individuals within the community.

While the structured portions of the interviews provided valuable demographic data about the schools, the most telling data about the campaigns resulted from the more unstructured portions of the interviews. The questions required the interviewees to identify those variables they believed had a critical impact on the outcomes of the elections.

Unstructured Perception Data

The unstructured portions of the interviews required those being interviewed to identify factors they believed were most critical to either the success or failure of their bond issue election. Again, school districts A and B conducted successful bond issue campaigns; school districts C and D had unsuccessful elections. Although many of the questions asked in this portion of the interview were based on the situation within a school district, two questions were the same for all interviewees. The first asked them to identify, in rank order, those factors they felt had the most impact on their election. The second asked the respondents to offer advice to others preparing for a bond issue campaign.

Table 6 shows the ranked factors of individuals from School Districts A. The superintendent ranked the work of the citizens steering committee as having the most impact on the results of their successful election. The public information sessions ranked second. The superintendent ranked the ability of the district to identify "yes" voters and ensure they voted as the third most critical factor in the election.

His major point of advise for others in bond issue campaigns is to keep the board of education and the administration in a "low key" mode of operation throughout the campaign. He maintains that allowing the citizens committee to conduct most of the activities in the campaign engenders more support. He also indicates that public information sessions must provide clear factual information about the needs of the school district and provide sincere responses to questions from the public.

Another activity that he considers important is ensuring that "yes" voters get to the polls. His final piece of advice concerned sharing information with other districts who had conducted school bond election campaigns. For example, at the time of his school district's campaign, another school district had just completed a successful campaign effort. His discussions with the other district's superintendent allowed him to compare tactics that were working well and identify problem points during the campaign. Thus, by sharing this type of information those efforts that seemed to hold the greatest potential for success could be utilized.

The citizens committee member from School District A ranked eight factors as having critical impact on the results of the election. Of most importance was presenting an obvious need to the community. Second, the committee member pointed to the diverse make up of the steering committee. Including representatives from all segments of the community increased the credibility of the committee's recommendations, which dealt comprehensively with all levels of education and presented improved opportunities for all students. The plan and organization for reaching the "yes" voters was also very effective. Another key to the victory appeared to be the number of active

Table 6

Ranked Factors Impacting Bond Election

Successful School District A

Rank	Superintendent	Citizen	Newspaper	Banker
1	Citizens Committee	Obvious need	Support committee well organized	Condition of schools
2	Public meetings	Work of diverse committee	Committee knew information	Broad support appearing from segments of community
3	Center on "Yes" votes	Plan and organization very effective	Wide cross-section of community on committee	Prior community bonds deflated opposition
4		Plan equal for all kids.	Need for new facilities	Economy was relatively good
5		Share message on personal basis	Needed renovations at other school	
6		Start early	Over-crowding	
7		Board & Adm. not actively involved	Tax increase well explained and not that large	
8		Work hard on 1st attempt	Campaign hard to argue against	

citizens working throughout the community in support of the bond issue. The citizens committee program also provided for reaching community members on a personal level through such activities as public meetings, ads, radio talk shows, and meetings with senior citizens. The citizens committee representative also listed the the early starting date of the campaign as of critical impact because it allowed the committee to reach all segments of the community. The low profile maintained by board of education members and administrators was also important. Committee members made all of the public presentations, with the assistance of the architect and financial advisors. Finally, the citizens committee representative indicated that the community seemed to have been influenced by other bond elections that had taken place in the community.

The individual identified three activities that she believed were most effective in bringing the "yes" voters to the polls. They included a canvass of the community during which positive voters were identified, using telephone trees to make certain "yes" voters arrived at the polls on elections day, and an effort to get absentee ballots to "yes" voters who were going to be out of town on election day.

This committee member believes that others can best prepare for a bond issue by creating a committee to work on identifying the problem and presenting possible solutions that represent a broad range of views within the community. This prevents the opposition from organizing a formalized effort to defeat the bond proposal. Understanding public perceptions is also critical to designing practical and appropriate activities that meet the needs identified by the committee.

The newspaper editor in School District A identified eight factors he believed had a critical impact on the results of the election. He first credited the organization of the groups supporting the bond issue. The public meetings, the letters written, and the children involved in the door-to-door campaign were also very impressive because persons from the committee understood the needs of the school and could communicate the appropriate information. He also believes that the committee's broad-based makeup contributed to the effectiveness of the campaign, and that the wide-spread knowledge throughout the community of the needs of the schools helped pass the proposal. The committee clearly explained the amount of the tax increases in relation to the benefits to be gained, and it was difficult to argue against the facts they presented. The newspaper editor also believes that the attitude of the general public toward the bond issue was very receptive, at least in part because the school district had not proposed a bond issue for 20 years.

The editor believes that, to be successful, others must put together a committee that is well prepared to explain the issue to the public. It is also important to start early and plan a campaign strategy. Direct attention to educating and gaining the support of the local media is also essential. Finally, the school board must be certain that the new taxes requested are not an undue burden to the people; according to the editor, they should be less than the cost of a candy bar per day.

The banker in School District A ranked the condition of the existing elementary schools as the factor that had the most impact on the results of the bond election. Most segments of the community could clearly see the need for the proposed project. He also believes that two prior bond issues had "taken the starch" out of the opposition. The banker also pointed to the generally good economy in the community as a key factor. The improved economic environment meant that only those individuals with "fixed incomes" had real concerns about the added tax.

The banker believes that the success of the bond issue had a definite impact on the business climate of the community. Discussions now center on the positive contribution of the school to the community, especially in terms of attracting new businesses or professionals to the area.

The banker from School District A shared seven points of advice for preparing for a bond issue campaign. First, he indicates that the school district should have an identifiable and known need. Supporters should be prepared with a diversity of information. Having the campaign run by members of the community is also important for success. The banker also suggests that members of the business community must stand up and understand that schools are the cornerstone of the community. The committee must also know the areas and levels of support and opposition when preparing their campaign efforts. Finally, it is important that various options be presented in the committee's recommendation to the board of education. Such investigations communicate a desire to consider alternatives before requesting more tax dollars. Table 7 provides a comparison of suggestions made by the representatives to others preparing for a school bond election campaign.

School District B also experienced a successful bond election. The ranked factors expressed by members of this community are shown in Table 8. Table 9 includes the advice they would give others. The superintendent of School District B reported that establishing a positive school environment was the most critical factor in achieving a successful outcome. The creation of a positive image for the school was coupled with rapid growth in the community over the last 20 years. The superintendent indicated that this condition was obvious to all voters, even those without children in the schools. The tradition of community growth has made the people of the community more progressive—even the retirement community has been supportive of the schools. The positive environment allowed the election to proceed without an organized opposition group. The timing of the election was also important. It occurred before a state-imposed freeze on property taxes and before the revaluation of properties. The committees supporting the bond issue worked to inform the people of the factors affecting school needs. The superintendent believes that hard work, timing, and a very pro-education media staff were all important to the eventual victory.

The superintendent advises others to be certain the entire school board supports the bond issue. Second, he indicates that a district must examine all of the alternatives available and involve the public in studying a variety of options (including year-round scheduling, use of existing facilities, and various building designs) until the best plan is determined. It is also important to work closely with older citizens and to hold several meetings to inform everyone in the community of the total package being considered. A strong planning process shows efficiency. Finally, this educational leader stresses the importance of hard work throughout the campaign and the value of remaining positive against all opposition and challenges.

Table 7
Advice to Others Preparing for Election
Successful School District A

Superintendent	Citizen	Newspaper	Banker
Keep Board and Administration low key	Develop broad committee with different views	Be prepared to explain the issue	Really have a need
Use citizens committee	Focus on children	Must explain & show to those not knowledgable of issues	Get information from total community
Public meetings	Know public perceptions	Start early and plan strategy	Work done by people from community
Center on "Yes" voters	Design practical & appropriate needs	Get media support	Use letters from wide segments of the community
Talk with another successful district		Taxes must not be a burden	Suggests business community stand up for school needs
			Committee must do background work to know opposition
			Prepare various options, then select choice for election

The citizens committee member from School District B identified growth in the community as the factor having the most impact on the result of this election. Because of this growth and the potential for attracting new businesses to the community, the townspeople saw the request for a new school as reasonable. Their own growth, and the continued growth of a local college, created an optimistic attitude in most voters.

Table 8

Ranked Factors Impacting Bond Election

Successful School District B

Rank	Superintendent	Citizen	Newspaper	Banker
1	Established a positive school attitude	Growth in community	Growth in community	Feeling in community that something had to be done
2	Very rapid growth known to all	Potential of additional growth	A growth task force helped present issue to community	Media supportive
3	Growing environment makes people progressive	New businesses coming to town	School was putting in the middle school concept and this building plan matched	School district very involved with senior citizens group
4	Supportive retirement community	College growth in community		Community was growing. Taxes up, but needed
5	Timing excellent, before tax freeze & revaluation	Optimism of good future		Not much coaxing needed
6	Worked hard to inform citizens			School district did a good job educating the public
7	Pro-education media people			

The committee representative identified three activities as being the most critical to obtaining a victory in the bond election. First, a telephone tree was utilized throughout the campaign to reach individual citizens identified as "yes" voters. Teachers also promoted the concept in their class-

Table 9

Advice to Others Preparing for Election

Successful School District B

Superintendent	Citizen	Newspaper	Banker
Must have total Board support	Get good newspaper coverage throughout	Set up a growth or community task force	Must prepare and do PR work to gain community support
Examine all alternatives and have public involved	Facts & figures must show need	Involve many people from community because even parents don't really know school's needs	Strong selling campaign to show public need is greater than tax increase
Work with older citizens	Identify business climate and match with school need	Build a functional facility not a monument	
Hold many public meetings	Give special attention to senior citizen vote		
Work hard and stay positive	Get task forces vote of confidence and then present to community		
Planning process must show efficiency to the people	Identify cost factors for all alternatives and compare the "Pros and Cons" of each		

rooms; thus, the children transmitted a positive messages to parents, friends and community members. Finally, the media in the community presented the facts to the community in a positive and thorough fashion, eliminating many concerns and questions in the early days of the campaign.

The committee representative shared six points of advice for preparing for a bond issue campaign. First, districts should incorporate newspaper coverage throughout the entire process to keep the voters informed as to campaign activities. Second, facts and figures distributed to the public should clearly identify the need for a new facility. The district should also analyze the present business climate and other economic factors within the community as to how they affect the needs of the school. The respondent indicated that it is important to be aware of the "economic quality factors" and "the pillars of strength in your community." Special attention should also be given to the needs of senior citizens in the community. Their concerns must be dealt with by providing information that links the schools to the future well-being of the community. An effort should be made to see that these individuals can get to the polls or that they receive absentee ballots. The citizens committee should also ensure that the efforts of the committee are clearly presented to the community. Finally, the task force should provide information as to the cost factors of options other than the proposed bond issue. The pros and cons of alternatives should be clearly identified so that voters can see the benefits of the proposed plan.

The newspaper editor of School District B also identified growth in the community as having the most significant impact on the result of the election. He also believes that only a voter who was totally non-communicative in any form would not have understood the need for an additional facility to house the rapidly expanding student population. No activities in the campaign made as much of a contribution to success as the reality of the growth situation. The school district had developed a growth task force from the community. These individuals then presented the bond program to the public. Finally, the school was changing its scheduling process to the middle school concept. This proposed building plan worked well with the needs of the middle school concept.

The editor believes the attitude of the general public was positive toward the bond issue project. Further discussion identified timing as another significant factor, because no re-valuation of property in the community had taken place and the tax freeze, implemented in 1989, had not been established by the state. This, combined with growth, lessened the concerns of the voters. Certainly, if these factors had been reversed, the bond issue election would have faced more opposition.

The editor shared three items of advice to others preparing for a bond issue campaign. First, he believes that it is critical to create a community task force to investigate alternatives and share the findings with others in the community. Second, it is important to involve as many people as possible in the campaign. Finally, in order to gain widespread community support, the facility being built should be functional, not a monument to some individual working on the campaign.

The banker from Community B identified the community's feeling that "something needed to be done" as the most significant factor affecting the outcome of the election. The need was so obvious that most voters did not need much coaxing to support the proposal. He also indicates that the media had been very supportive of the proposal and that the school district had done a good job of educating the community.

The same theme continued through the next three questions. The general economy of the community was good and improving through growth, and the community could see that advantages of the positive image that would be created for attracting new businesses to the community.

The banker advises others preparing for a bond issue that even progressive school districts must do the public relations work necessary to persuade their communities to pass bond issues. A strong selling campaign must be utilized that focuses on the school's needs for future generations rather than on the tax increase required to fund the proposed building project. Interviews with representatives from School District C provided perceptions and information concerning factors affecting an unsuccessful campaign for new school facilities. A comparison of the ranked factors identified by the community representatives is provided in Table 10. A summary of what these individuals would advise others is provided in Table 11.

Table 10
Ranked Factors Impacting Bond Election
Unsuccessful School District C

Rank	Superintendent	Citizen 1	Citizen 2	Newspaper	Banker
1	Size of levy too high and uncertainty of future taxes	Fear of unknown taxes	Fear of unknown taxes	Fear of unknown taxes	Tax climate
2	Opposition working in the community	Short time frame	Moved too fast	Price tag of $8.9 million	Opposition working in the community
3	Use of old building for elementary school	Lack of faith in task force recommendation	Opposition groups working behind the scenes	Uncertainty of confidence in school board and new superintendent	Chemistry between Superintendent and elements of community not good
4	Board vote not a majority			School board purchased land for new school one week prior to election	Proposal more complex than needed for clear understanding

The superintendent of School District C pointed to several factors that had a significant effect on the election results. First, he believes that the levy increase requested was too high ($2.31 per $1,000 valuation), and that voters were uncertain about the impact of an upcoming state tax freeze and reassessment of property in the district. The financial uncertainty created by these factors contributed to the formation of an opposition group of influential citizens in the community. The opposition group did not formally organize, but operated largely "behind the scenes," questioning the need and design of the proposed bond election. Such a "strategy" is difficult to counter.

Table 11

Advice to Others Preparing for Election

Unsuccessful School District C

Superintendent	Citizen 1	Citizen 2	Newspaper	Banker
Don't rush to get to the polls	Focus on grounds for need	Educate earlier	Not this decade!	Keep it simple
Get "good old boys on board"	Make building cost last item to discuss	Test through straw vote and analyze opposition	General population needs to feel a part of the design campaign	Try to reach a concensus with opposition
Must have total board support	Focus on problems then solution	Work with media	Bring opposition group into design program	Get the right forumla to get chemistry working in community
Obtain staff support	Allow time to prepare	Have press at all committee meetings reporting events		Include main street representation in task force
Allow time to answer all questions and concerns that come up		30 days is not enough time to prepare		Timing a big factor in design of need versus tax climate

The superintendent also pointed to the lack of support from staff members, some of whom did not want the old middle school building used as a new elementary school. Their reasoning was that if the facility was not good enough for middle school students, it certainly was not good enough for elementary students. Finally, the superintendent pointed to the lack of unamimous support of the board of education as a critical factor. Many people in the community believed that if the board was not totally in favor of the plan, there had to be something wrong with the design.

The superintendent offered several items of advice for others. First, school districts should not try to rush the election. Instead, they should take the time to design a plan that will reach all segments of the community. Efforts should be made to identify the perceptions of community members and obtain input from them. He also believes that it is important to be sure the "good old boys" are on board. He indicated that it is a serious mistake to underestimate their influence on the community. The superintendent also cautioned others to be sure the staff and school board support the proposal before proceeding.

School District C asked that two members from the citizens committee be interviewed. The first citizens committee member identified fear of unknown taxes as the primary contributor to the defeat of the bond issue. The lack of time to run the campaign was also an important issue for this representative. September 30 through November 12 was simply too short a time frame in which to adequately inform the community of the needs being faced by the district. The lack of time also created credibility problems for the citizens committee. Many in the district did not have faith in the task force recommendations and believed that it was a rubber-stamp committee. They doubted the community could recommend spending the large sum of money with such a short period of study and consideration.

Although "yes" votes were in the minority, this committee member identified the work of 30 volunteer parents and educators as important to bringing "yes" voters to the polls. Even in losing school bond elections it appears to be critical to involve a citizens committee.

This committee representative suggested that others preparing for a bond issue campaign should, foremost, focus on building the case for the need. The design of the building and the dollars necessary to construct it should be the last items discussed. Deal with the problem first, and then, through a review of alternatives, suggest the best solution for the problem.

Allowing enough time for this process and to implement the activities necessary to obtain support from the community is also very important.

The second committee member interviewed identified timing as the factor that had the most impact on the unsuccessful result of the campaign. The first problem with the timing of the campaign was outside of the control of the school district. A two-year tax freeze imposed by the state was about to end and property was being reassessed throughout the district. Taxpayers did not know how much their tax burden would actually be and the uncertainty created a prohibitive environment for supporting a bond issue. The second timing problem involved the short time period allowed for the campaigning. The district tried to move too fast from board action to the time the solution was presented to the people. This representative also identified the activities of a personal/political opposition group as a key factor in the defeat. Unfortunately, those leading the campaign were not aware of the power of this group. The committee member believes that they should have been included as part of the working committee. This committee member also indicated that the citizens committee did utilize telephoning and meetings, which contributed to "yes" voters coming to the polls. The individual believes that those who were informed became "yes" voters.

The committee representative advised others to begin their education campaigns early (30 days is just not enough time). Public attitudes should be tested early on by the use of straw votes, and campaign activities should be adjusted to meet the concerns of negative voters. The interviewee also suggested that it is important to establish good relations with the media from the beginning of the campaign. The press should be invited to all committee meetings. They can then report, through their own point of view, the events that are taking place. This is far superior to the use of news releases.

The editor of the newspaper in School District C identified the state tax freeze and the property re-valuation as the most critical factor having an impact on this election, but he also pointed to the $8.9 million price tag for the project as a significant problem. The potential tax burden turned many voters away from supporting the proposal. Many taxpayers also lacked confidence in the direction that was being taken by the new superintendent and school board. The previous administration had been conservative compared to the philosophy of what constituted quality education advocated by the new superintendent. The board also mis-timed the purchase of land for the project, taking the action one week before the bond election. Taking such an action that close to the election influenced the decision of many voters.

The editor felt that the public was generally pro-education but that, while their hearts told them to vote "yes," their pocketbooks said to vote "no." The taxpayers seemed to be telling the school board to go back and do some homework prior to the next vote.

The editor prefaced his advice to others with the statement, "not in this decade" in the state of South Dakota. He indicated that those planning campaigns should involve the general population in the campaign design and that the committee needs to identify the vocal critics in the community and bring them into the process. The strong "coffee group" is generally negative by nature; involving its members in the planning gives them something to lose personally if the campaign is not successful.

The banker from Community C identified the tax climate, including the re-valuation of property and the state-imposed, two-year tax freeze as the factor having the most impact on the results of the bond election. He also pointed to the opposition of some influential groups in the community (i.e., local property owners, knowledgeable school personnel, and those oppossed to any tax increases) as a significant problem. The support groups did not sufficiently recognize the importance of emphasizing a "social cause." In addition, problems between the superintendent and certain elements within the community created mistrust, and the proposal was more complex than necessary for a clear understanding by the voting public.

The banker indicated that the general public had a positive attitude toward education, but that they were concerned about taxes and other educational issues. Although the economy in the community was good, the failure of the bond issue on the business climate in the community was not substantial, at least, in comparison to the negative financial impact of the tax climate and additional expenditures to fund the bond issue proposal.

The bank representative from this community suggested that others working on bond issue campaigns keep it simple, try to reach a consensus with factions that might form an opposition, develop positive relations with the community, and insure that "main street" is represented on the school's task force. Anyone entering into a campaign should understand that attempting a sizable bond election in a negative tax climate is an extremely difficult task.

Representatives from School District D, which also experienced a defeat, were the final interviewees for this study. Table 12 provides a comparison of the factors ranked by the representatives as having an impact on this bond election. The representatives' advice to others is summarized in Table 13.

The superintendent of School District D identified three factors as having significant impact on the negative results of this campaign. The most critical factor was the additional property tax being requested by an already "high-taxing" school district. Demographic factors were also identified as important. Only 35 percent of the community has school-age children. To obtain a victory all individuals with children would have to vote "yes" along with 25 percent of those who did not have children. To many voters, the size of the proposed project was also somewhat overwhelming.

This superintendent advised others to thoroughly identify the needs of the school to the community through an extensive study conducted by public groups. The committee should be made up of a cross-section of the community, and they should do the majority of the campaigning and selling of the proposal to the community. He also suggested that normally recommended public relations techniques be used. A new suggestion was to develop a committee of bankers and financial consultants that would investigate and propose more available options to the public. The campaign should last from 8 to 10 weeks.

Table 12
Ranked Factors Impacting Bond Election
Unsuccessful School District D

Rank	Superintendent	Citizen	Newspaper	Banker
1	Property tax increase	Didn't get enough yes voters to the polls	Property tax increase	Property tax increase
2	Only 35% of population had children. 25% of those needed to win even if all others voted yes	No one wanted more property taxes.	People did not understand or believe the needs known for over 30 years	Average age of voting population not having school-aged children
3	Years of building neglect make project overwhelming	People perceived old buildings as adequate	Need for more citizen involvement in the formal committee work	Confusion over the projects
4		Site location and the neighborhood concept		Belief that present facilities were adequate
5		Community too accepting of existing poor quality		

The citizens committee member believed that the district did not get enough of the "yes" voters to the polls. Because a majority of the voting public perceived the old buildings as being adequate, the bond issue was considered simply a tax issue, and no one wants more property taxes. To compound the situation, the site location forced many voters to give up the neighborhood concept of elementary education.

Table 13

Advice to Others Preparing for Election

Unsuccessful School District D

Superintendent	Citizen	Newspaper	Banker
Identify need to community through study and public groups.	Combine school/city proposal requiring a 50% positive vote.	Work with local media to explain the need	Organize your strategy
Get good cross-section of community to lead and sell campaign.	Do what we did, but get the people on the street involved	Organize public input meetings	Identify the building sites.
Do everything known to sell the project	Educate public about real need for issue	Need for public input groups to support the issue	Clearly explain financial needs to the public.
Put together a group of bankers and financial consultants to share options with the public	Question is, How do we get people to realize education is a priority over money?	Use wide variety of approaches to get the "word out"	Sell plan in major way using community support groups not educators.
Need an eight to ten week campaign to be effective	Waiting costs more dollars	Be open and up front on why this issue is needed	Do not go to the public with a facility plan so conservative that no other options are available.
	Drive the push from the grassroots level	Maybe, 60% isn't really a majority vote.	

That the community perceived the poor quality elementary schools as being adequate frustrated some of the outstanding efforts made by the support committee. Supporters, including administrators, parents, business people, teachers, and others, worked diligently to design a campaign that would communicate the difficult realities facing the schools. They conducted school tours to show voters the terrible conditions of the buildings. Staff members were supportive and shared their feelings with the community. The media emphasized the school district's strong curriculum needed good facilities to be effective. All the efforts were not enough, however, to reach the required 60 percent margin of victory necessary.

This representative urged others to work to amend state law so that a simple majority would be the requirement for passage, the 60 percent requirement being too stringent considering the demographics of many districts. The committee member also indicated that the campaign must be designed around "grass roots" support and involve the people on the street as working contributors to the project. The representative showed the frustration in the statement: "How do we get people to realize that education is the main priority, not just the money? Remember that waiting costs more in interest and bid amounts. The building will simply cost more in the future."

The newspaper editor ranked three factors as having the most impact on the results of this election. First, the property tax increase requested was too large. Even though many attempts were made to explain the needs facing the school district, the voters did not really believe or understand the need for new elementary schools. Third, more supportive citizen involvement was needed in committee work. The editor reported that the attitude among the general public was split. The first attempt at passing this bond issue received a 48 percent level of support. The second election raised the suppport level to 53 percent; however, the attitude remained that while the schools may be needed, property taxes should not be raised to build them.

The editor advised others to work closely with the local media to explain the need to the public. They should also organize public input meetings to build more support for the bond issue. He also suggests that a variety of approaches be used to communicate with the public, and that supporters need to be open and up front about why the facility is needed. This interview concluded with the suggestion that maybe 60 percent isn't really a majority vote!

The banker from Community D identified the property tax increase as the factor that most affected the negative outcome of the election. He also believes that the average age of the voting population and the fact that most did not have school-age children as critical. Confusion over what the new buildings would accomplish and the belief that the present facilities were adequate also contributed to the defeat of the issue.

He indicated that the population was generally in favor of the project but believed that the property tax was an unfair way to finance the program. The location for the new facility also created some problems. The banker held that the economy in the community was fair to good at the time, and that non-passage probably had a negative affect on the business climate (new businesses looking at the community are not positive about the quality of the schools); however, existing businesses have been largely unaffected by the negative vote.

The finanacial representative of the community advised others preparing for a bond campaign to organize a campaign that will reach all segments of the community. He also suggested that building sites be clearly identified. A clear outline of financial needs, which can be easily understood by the voting public, is also essential to success. The banker did not believe that the district marketed the proposal as effectively as they might have and recommends that a community-wide group of supporters be organized into a committee to sell the plan to the voters. Unfortunately, the district had developed a "Chevrolet" plan instead of a "Cadillac" design, so when the issue failed, the committee had nowhere to turn in developing a smaller package that might have been supported by the voting public.

Summary

The research technique of exploratory data analysis identified factors that had a critical impact on the outcomes of bond election campaigns in the four school districts included in this study. The data are summarized below.

School District A experienced a successful bond election (76.6% approval) that provided $4.85 million of revenue for a new 87,056 square foot building and renovation for elementary schools. The request represented a tax levy increase of $1.72 per one thousand dollars of valuation. The district utilized the services of a bond consultant and hired an architect 7.5 months prior to the election. Representatives identified the work and support of a citizens group in promoting the bond issue and the obviously poor condition of existing facilities as the two most critical factors in the bond election.

The citizens committee, made up of 26 members representing all segments of the community, first utilized a telephone campaign, a door-to-door canvass of the community, and public meetings to identify and encourage "yes" voters to come to the polls. The group was led by an inidividual who had come to the board of education suggesting the possibility of a bond election for improvements in the elementary schools. The support group worked first to identify needs, working to achieve a plan that would offer equal opportunities for all the elementary students in the district. They also raised funds, publicized activities, created a speakers bureau, handed out brochures, developed a theme and programming for meetings throughout the community, worked with senior citizens groups, and used telephoning and poll watching to ensure that "yes" voters came to the polls.

The campaign did not face opposition from an organized community group. The newspaper in the community was supportive of the school bond attempt and carried editorials supporting a positive vote. Letters to the editor were received both supporting and opposing the bond issue. Letters of support discussed the school district's needs and the importance of the contributions made by previous generations. Letters of opposition centered on tax hikes.

Representatives from School District A advised that board members and adminsitrators keep a low profile during the campaign, and advise others to allow a citizens committee, made up of members from all segments of the community, to conduct the actual campaigning. The representatives also suggested that election campaigns start early, have the support of the media, and concentrate on the "yes" voters. Consultation with another district similar in size that had experienced success in a bond election was also identified as a critical factor for providing techniques that produced positive results.

School District B passed a $6.35 million bond issue, with a 65.5 percent level of support. This election, for a 96,200 square foot middle school, requested a levy increase of $2.04 per one thousand dollars valuation. The district utilized the services of a bond consultant and hired the architect four months prior to the election date. The district utilized a telephone campaign and public meetings to distribute information.

Extreme growth throughout the community surfaced as the major reason for taxpayer support. The needs of the schools were expressed in letters to the newspaper and attitudes throughout the community. Letters of opposition to the bond issue focused on concerns over increases in property taxes. The editor of the newspaper supported the bond issue and published an editorial encouraging readers to support the request from the school dstrict. A positive school environment, a supportive retirement community, and a pro-education media service were identified as secondary factors affecting the result of the election. As well, the school district was implementing a new middle school concept of scheduling, and the new middle school facility allowed the school to more adequately meet its educational mission.

The citizens support group was composed of an equal number of teachers and community members, the superintendent of schools, a business person and the wife of a county commissioner. This group reviewed school needs and looked at other facilities available in the community before recommending the construction of a new middle school building.

From their experiences, the interviewed representatives recommended that others set up a community task force to investigate alternatives and share facts and figures with the voting public. They indicated that total board support, good newspaper coverage, and special attention to the senior citizen vote are essential for a successful school bond election campaign.

School District C suffered a defeat at the polls on a $8.9 million request for a 199,000 square food middle school. The district utilized a bond consultant, a public relations consultant and hired an architect four months prior to the election. Nevertheless, a tax levy increase of $2.31 per one thousand dollars valuation was partially responsible for the 44.35 percent level of support from the voting population. Of the four school districts reviewed in this study, School District C was the only district with a non-majority vote by the board of education on the bond issue referendum. The district used a telephone campaign and conducted a door-to-door canvass, but it did not utilize a poll watcher and had poor attendance at its public meetings. The "behind the scenes" work of an opposition group was consistently identified as an item of critical impact on this bond election. The newspaper carried an editorial in support of the election and letters to the editor identified the district's educational philosophy and overcrowding in middle school classrooms as reasons for a positive vote. Letters of opposition centered on the high tax request, the effects of the state tax freeze, and potential reassessment of property values in the community. The citizens support group was headed by the parent of a high school student and a hired public relations consultant.

The committee was composed of 20 people from all sectors of the community. Activities included building tours, 25 public meetings, news conferences, mailed pamphlets, three public meetings, radio talk shows, flyers, posters, advertising, a door-to-door canvass, and a telephone campaign. District representatives ranked the large size of the tax levy requested, the uncertainty of future taxes, and the presence of an opposition in the community as the primary reasons the bond issue failed. Also listed were the lack of a unanimous board vote and the purchase of land for the new school only one week prior to the election.

School District C representatives advised others to allow adequate time to prepare and educate the voting public on the needs of the school district. They also indicated that reaching a consensus with the opposition to bring them into the design program and gaining the full support of the school board and staff members as critical to establishing credibility with the general public.

School District D failed in two attempts to improve the elementary schools in the district. The second election received a 53.49 percent level of support, not enough to meet the state requried 60 percent level. The election asked voters for $6.995 million for 130,000 square feet for two elementary schools (a levy increase of $2.40 per one thousand dollars valuation). This amount was identified as a factor having critical impact on the election outcome. The district utilized a bond consultant and a design consultant, but did not hire an architect prior to the election. The district also used a telephone campaign, a door-to-door canvass, and public meetings to inform voters of the needs faced by the school district.

The newspaper supported the bond election through editorials and published letters of support identifying the lack of space and the number of out-dated facilities in the community. Letters of opposition focused almost exclusively on the level of property tax increases. The citizens group supporting the bond issue conducted the same activities utilized by the other districts; however, the amount of property tax increase became the most important issue of the election. The demographics of this particular district also influenced the outcome in that only 35 percent of the voters in the community have school-age children, making it extremely difficult to reach the 60 percent approval rating required.

Representatives from this community expressed complaints about the 60 percent approval level required to pass a school bond issue, and some suggested that the law should be changed. They advised other groups conducting school bond issue campaigns do all the activities generally recommended, but that they also include people from the grass-roots level in the designing and marketing phases of the campaign.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

This study was undertaken to determine which variables affect school bond election outcomes. An exploratory data analysis, which provides an explanation of isolated techniques in action on real data rather than a summary of case histories (Tukey, 1971), was used. To achieve success in traditionally unpopular school bond issue elections, school administrators must be aware of those factors which contribute to passage of school bond issues and must be able to conduct effective school bond issue campaigns.

The age of school buildings currently being used in the United States is evidence of the difficulties administrators face in passing school bond issues. The American Association of School Administrators (AASA) reports that nearly five million students in the nation's public schools attend classes in 13,200 inadequate school buildings – one-eighth of the public schools in the country. These facilities are overcrowded and structurally and environmentally hazardous. Most lack adequate heating, cooling, and electrical systems (Zachariya, 1991).

The situation in South Dakota is certainly no less critical. Reports from the South Dakota Department of Education and Cultural Affairs indicate that half of the public school buildings in the state have outlived their usefulness. In fact, 46 percent of the public school buildings currently in use in South Dakota are over 30 years old and are inadequate for the technology and outcome-based educational systems of the future ("Aging School Buildings," 1991).

Over the next few years, many, if not most, school administrators in South Dakota and the United States will be faced with the problem of finding ways to fund new buildings and retrofit older buildings. Most will have to initiate school bond elections to secure the necessary revenues. Bond issue elections have been the greatest obstacle to progress. Naturally, in the present difficult economic times, most taxpayers are reluctant to raise their own taxes, even if they are aware of and concerned about the needs of the local schools. The problem of obtaining passage in South Dakota is exacerbated by the statute that requires a 60 percent "yes" vote for the passage of a school bond proposal (South Dakota, 1988).

While the requirement is intended to protect taxpayers' interests, the nearly two-to-one margin of favorability needed to issue bonds is extremely difficult to reach in most communities. The consensus among administrators is that almost no bond issue passes on the first attempt, and that many will continue to fail through as many as five attempts.

As if dealing with aging buildings and obtaining a 50 percent–60 percent requirement for voter approval were not enough of a challenge, very few school administrators are adequately trained in the techniques of developing a successful community-wide bond election campaign. College and university programs leading to state certification for school superintendency provide only minimal review of the topic, and most of the knowledge administrators gain is through on-the-job training. This study enabled the researcher to utilize knowledge obtained in planning school bond campaigns to identify factors that have an impact on the outcomes of school bond elections.

The study explored those factors that contributed to the success or failure of bond elections in four selected school districts in South Dakota. The specific research questions answered included:

1. What specific variables contributed to the success of school bond elections in two selected school districts?
2. What specific variables contributed to the failure of school bond elections in two selected school dsitricts?
3. What specific variables can be identified with regard to selected characteristics of the school districts?

School administrators in South Dakota will be able to use much of the information in this study when planning school bond election campaigns. College and university programs may also find the information helpful when dealing with the subject of school bond issues in their course work.

The review of literature in Chapter 2 was organized into three sections. The first section reviewed Crosswait's 1967 dissertation. The second section, "Periodical Research," reviewed articles by individuals who had worked on school bond issue campaigns and shared techniques they used to pass school bond issues.The information the articles contained provides much needed information about the total picture of planning, implementing and concluding the bond issue process. The final section reviewed conclusions from dissertations from across the United States. The comparisions made provide critical elements in the design of a successful bond issue campaign.

This study focuses on four subject school districts—two that conducted successful bond issue campaigns and two that conducted unsuccessful bond issue campaigns. The criterion used for selection of subject school districts was the median school district size in the United States—2,917 pupils (Jewel, 1989). Of the 179 school districts in South Dakota, 11 had school populations that fell within 836 students of this median number. Of the eleven, five had conducted school bond issue campaigns recently. The two successful and two unsuccessful districts chosen were those closest in size. These districts had school populations of 2,862, 2,820, 2,737, and 2,081 (South Dakota Department of Education and Cultural Affairs, 1991). The exploratory data analysis required instrumentation that allowed the researcher to obtain both basic information about the subject and critical information about the relationship of variables with larger applicability within an isolated case. Interviews that included both structured and non-structured portions were used to obtain this information. The researcher developed questions from these interviews based on his personal experiences and on information gleaned for the related literature. Four individuals from each of the four communities were interviewed using these instruments. The individuals selected included the superintendent of schools, a member of the citizens support committee, the editor of the local newspaper, and a local banker. These individuals were selected because they had first-hand knowledge of the required information and first-hand experiences with the internal and external factors affecting the results of each bond issue campaign.

In addition to questions concerning his or her perceptions of relevant factors, the superintendent of each district was asked a variety of questions concerning specific financial and particular numbers required for accurate responses that were obtainable only through school records. Interview questions of the other three repondents in each district were based on that particular person's area of expertise in relation to community environmental concerns. Each interview lasted between 20 and 30 minutes (see Appendix C for complete scripts of the interviews). The superintendent of schools in each of the four participating school districts identified and scheduled interviews with other individuals from the district.

Samples of print materials that respondents rated as having a significant impact on the results of the school bond elections are included in Appendix E. Those investigating the subject of school bond issue campaigns may wish to include similar materials in their campaigns.

Conclusions

Conclusions identified in this chapter reflect the data and perceptions expressed by those interviewed for this study and are based on those factors identified by the respondents as having a critical impact on the results of school bond issue elections. The conclusions are presented as per the data presented in the tables in Chapter 4.

Variables That Contribute to the Success of School Bond Elections

1. Based on the campaigns in this study, 35.5 percent to 40 percent of the registered voters within a school district participate in school bond

elections. Those interviewed believe that the low voter turnout suggests that campaigns must be centered on getting "yes" voters to the polls.

2. The data indicate that an active citizens support group is of critical importance to a successful bond issue campaign, and all four districts utilized such groups. Variation occurred primarily in the role of the administration and school staffs and the length of time utilized for the campaign. While it was judged of importance to have administrator and staff support, the districts that experienced the greatest success were those in which administrators played a "low key" role, thus allowing members of the support group to assume the primary responsibility for educating the public. The school district that lost the election by the largest margin utilized only 30 days for their campaign – a factor identified by at least one person as being a reason for the defeat. The activities most utilized by support groups in the selected school districts included identification of needs of the school district, leadership in the promotion of the bond issue, fund rasing, publicity, door-to-door and telephone canvassing of the community, developing a campaign theme, designing brochures, making presentations for various community groups, conducting building tours, and participating in media events.

Individuals in all four districts indicated that creating a diverse community support group made up of individuals from all segments of the community was a critical factor in dealing with opposition within the community. Such inclusionary practices give more people a "personal stake" in the results of the election. Those from the district with the greatest margin of victory suggest that fund raising activities are also a good way of identifying persons who support the bond issue.

3. Media support was also judged to be important to the sucess of bond issue elections. The newspapers in each of the four communities carried editorials supporting the bond issue proposals. Apparently, newspapers will support the needs of the schools if given a clear explanation of the problems associated with existing facilities. They also carried letters to the editor supporting the bond issue proposals in all four communities, an effort that

was identified as of critical importance in a bond issue campaign. Based on this study, letters of support should identify the problems faced by the students, and the issues of growth, overcrowding, and lack of space. Letters concerning the educational philosophy of the school, the outdated nature of present facilities, and the contributions of previous generations to the schools also seemed to be effective. Three of the four communities had letters of opposition sent to the editors. These letters identified property tax increases as the reason for not supporting new school facilities; responding letters should focus on the gains in relation to the tax increase (e.g., image of the community and attracting new businesses).

4. All of the districts utilized telephone campaigning and door-to-door canvassing as techniques for educating the community about the needs of the school district. Holding public meetings was also identified as a critical factor. Only the district with the highest margin of victory utilized a poll watcher to ensure that all individuals identified as potential "yes" voters actually made it to the polls.

5. All four districts utilized the services of a bond consultant to help educate workers on activities that bring "yes" voters to the polls. The service was also identified as a necessary tool for completing required documentation to purchase bonds after the election has been won.

Variables That Contributed to the Failure of School Bond Elections

1. The most consistent variable identified as contributing to the failure of bond issues is a lack of understanding of attitudes and perceptions within the community and among the educational staff about the schools. Failure to identify negative attitudes gives rise to opposition groups, identified by some as a critical factor in the school bond issue loss. Both school districts in this study that experienced failure, had difficulties with opposition groups. One also was unable to deal with staff perceptions that elementary students and teachers would be housed in a building the campaign said was inadequate. The other had problems convincing the public that the present

facilities were inadequate. Such problems might have been dealt with in the early stages of the campaigns if those attitudes had been known and a public relations program developed to deal with the situation.

2. Information obtained from the respondents indicates that the school board decision to proceed with the election must be unanimous. It appears that a negative vote sends a message to the public that something is wrong with the presented plan and that it does not warrant support at the polls.

3. The increase in tax levy requested by a particular school district appears to be a critical element in the success or failure of a school bond election. In fact, both schools that lost their elections indicated that concern over the raise in taxes was a critical element in the defeat of the issue. The data from those interviewed would suggest that the amount of levy increase per one thousand dollars valuation must not greatly exceed $2.00 per one thousand dollars to have a successful election. The use of capital outlay dollars as another source of funding should be considered as an option for lowering the levy increase requested.

Variables Specific to the Characteristics of a School District

1. While not a critical element in all school districts, the design and location of the new construction appear to be related to the success or failure of bond issues in some districts. This is particularly true in districts where relocation of students means longer school bus drives or attending school in a different area of the community.

While some suggest that it is important to keep the design on the most functional levels, one interviewee, from a school district where the issue failed, indicated the belief that it had been a mistake to offer the simplest design on the first attempt, in that the school board had nowhere to cut spending on the project for another attempt.

2. The demographics of the school districts also was indicated as of critical importance to the results of the school bond elections. For example, in one of the unsuccessful school districts only 35 percent of the adults in

the community had school-aged children. Meeting the 60 percent approval level required by the state in that situation is a formidable task. At least one individual in each of the selected school districts indicated that gaining the support of senior citizens was important to winning a school bond election.

3. School districts that won their elections indicated that knowledge of the rapid growth rates in their communities made it easier to sell the need for the bond issue. It would appear that the taxpayers' perceptions of the economic future of their community has a critical impact on their willingness to vote for new schools.

Discussion

Knowledge of those factors which contribute to the outcomes of school bond elections is necessary to run an effective school bond issue campaign. The exploration of the results of this study and the related literature provide several insights into those factors which are fairly universal, those which characterize successful school bond issue campaigns, and those which characterize unsuccessful campaigns.

The data would appear to indicate that those factors that have a critical impact on the outcomes of school bond elections in South Dakota are similar to those identified by administrators from other parts of the United States. For example, the results of a South Carolina School Board Association survey (Henry, 1987) identified concerns over high property taxes as the primary reason for opposition to school bond issues; those districts in this study that experienced opposition reported the same factor as the primary cause of opposition, and the two districts who passed their issues had the lowest increase in tax levies (see also, Puzey, 1986). The effect of voter turnout also appears to be similar. The South Carolina study indicates that the higher the voter turnout, the more likely the bond issue will pass; the results of this study indicate that those districts with the higher percentages of voter turn out were successful. Another similar factor was the presence of opposition groups. Henry's study revealed that the activities of an organized opposition group also contributed to a majority of failed bond elections; in the present study, both schools that lost the election had such opposition groups, while the two districts that won reported no opposition groups (see also, Gott, 1962; Puzey, 1986).

Within the related literature it was notable that the most effective campaign technique reported by a majority of the authors was utilization of a broad-based citizens support committee that engaged in a variety of campaign activities (see, Gott, 1962; Mitchell, 1962; Farley, 1962; McDaniel, 1963; Kennedy, 1971; Rowe, 1971; Ross, 1983; Hamel, 1984; Barney, 1984; Taylor, 1984; Houston, 1985; Surratt, 1987; Chopra, 1988; Swalm, 1989; Krop, 1989; Conyers & Francl, 1989; Graham et al., 1990; Greig, 1990; Peterson, 1990; and Carlson, 1990). The school districts in this study all had community support groups; however, the effectiveness of the committees in the school districts that lost their elections was hampered by lack of time and effective pre-campaign planning.

Many other similtarities were found between the situation in the school districts in this study and those found in the related literature. The importance is that voters in most school districts, regardless of district size or region, apparently tend to respond positively to similar techniques. Therefore, South Dakota administrators should be able to utilize many of the suggestions in the related literature to organize successful school bond campaigns, even though their school districts are demographically different than those reported in the literature. One point that was made by many in the related literature and many of the interviewees was the necessity for making the contacts between volunteers and the public personal and direct. Such contacts increase the voters sense of involvement and give them a more personal stake in the outcome.

The study also reveals that many of the factors that influenced school bond elections in South Dakota 25 years ago (Crosswait, 1967) are still factors, particularly as they relate to support committee activities and voter turnout. Such similarities would indicate that the likelihood of passage would be about the same today as it was in the 1960s; however, the slow-down in new school construction ("Aging School Buildings," 1991) has created a situation in which the need for replacing or renovating school structures is steadily increasing.

As stated above, the amount of increase in tax levies was identified in the schools in this study and some of the related literature as a primary reason for opposition to school bond issues. In fact, some (e.g., Romanik, 1987; Graham et al., 1990) indicate that they found specific levels of increase at which support levels dropped significantly. The results of this study indicate that the level where support appears to drop drastically is about $2.00 per $1,000 valuation. However, South Dakota administrators should look to the relationship of several factors to tax levy increases as a key to dealing with this factor, i.e. perception of need, design and site of the new facility, economic climate in the community, presence of a large senior citizens block, and bond money management. Indeed, several districts in the related literature reported passing large bond issues by paying careful attention to these other factors (Nelson, 1973; Ross, 1983; Taylor, 1984; Krop, 1989; Carlson, 1990; Herman, 1991). While the two successful districts had the lowest tax increase proposals, it is also interesting to note that many of the individuals interviewed noted that community awareness of need, optimism about the economic growth of the community, and a supportive senior citizens group all contributed to their victories. Individuals from the two losing school districts pointed to a lack of awareness of needs and uncertainty about the stability of the economic future as causes for their failure. Therefore, the important task may be to design a campaign that includes a public relations program that clearly establishes the need for the bond issue and emphasizes the positive relationship between quality schools and economic growth, a program that involves different segments of the community in activities in the school, and a plan for managing the bond issue funds so that the money is used efficiently. Such an endeavor may bring more positive results than simply offering the least expensive plan. Future study in this area might focus on the relationship of voter attitudes toward their schools and the level of tax increase they are willing to support.

Those wishing to replace or upgrade old facilities must be mindful that the decisions they make at every step of the process have some impact on the success or failure of the election. For example, before even considering a proposal, school officials should understand the attitudes of their community toward the school district. Negative attitudes toward the curriculum, quality of education, or school personnel on the part of segments of the community can have an adverse effect on the outcome of the election, unless steps are taken early on to alleviate the problems. Several reports in the related literature (e.g., Gott, 1962; Mitchell, 1962; Ross, 1983; Hamel, 1984; Henry, 1987; Romanik, 1987; Conyers and Francl, 1989; Graham et al., 1990) indicate a need to do "pre-proposal" surveying of the community. Others (e.g., Barney, 1984; Taylor, 1984; Houston, 1985; Herman, 1991) suggest that creating a "pre-bond issue planning committee" to assist in developing the proposal is an effective method of dealing with potentially negative attitudes within the community. It is also interesting to note that the citizens committee members from the two successful school districts in this study both reported "identifying needs" as one of their activities, while the corresponding individuals in the two unsuccessful school districts did not report such activities. While administrators in the small districts of South Dakota may believe they are aware of the attitudes that are present in their communities, they must admit that many individuals within a community do not come into contact with school officials and/or would be reluctant to express their real opinions to such persons. They should not overlook the importance of obtaining "hard" evidence as to the attitudes that actually exist within a community when planning their campaigns.

Study results and many reports in the related literature also point to the need for unity within the school board and school personnel as being an important element in school bond election successes. One school district in the study and several (e.g., Henry, 1967; McDaniel, 1967; Pulliam, 1983) in the literature report that having one school board member vote against the proposal is a critical factor in the loss of school bond elections. Such a vote seems to send a message to the public that the proposal is flawed. The message would appear to be: if someone on the board objects, it is probably best to rethink offering the proposal at this time.

While no two districts are identical and each faces its own unique problems, it would appear that administrators should acquaint themselves with the techniques and activities that have worked successfully in other school districts when planning their campaigns. Some of the activities presented in the related literature would have to be adapted to the particular situation within a district (i.e., the demographics of the community, the amount of money available for the campaign, media sources available), but most school districts in South Dakota can utilize many of the activities as they are.

Recommendations

To deal with the difficulties of passing a school bond election to fund replacing or remodeling outdated school buildings, school officials must prepare for an election campaign that will counter the effects of opposition concerned with increases in property taxes. The following recommendations are made to assist administrators in designing such campaigns.

1. The board of education decision to request the bond issue must be unanimous. Concessions as necessary should be made to achieve this support, as a less than unanimous vote may become fuel for opposition groups within the community.

2. Members of the board of education and administrators should maintain a low profile during the bond issue campaign, and they should allow promotional activities to be conducted by members of a broad-based community support group. Utilizing this type of campaign adds to the general perception of credibility in that those campaigning hardest are probably

viewed as more objective about the needs of the schools.

3. A diverse community task force should be created to review needs, study alternatives, make recommendations, and market the school bond proposal.

4. Bond issue activities should focus on maintaining the support of potential "yes" voters and seeing that "yes" voters go to the polls.

5. Local media and school staff should be involved in the early planning stage for a bond election.

6. Personal contacts to share the needs of the children in the school district should be made.

7. The services of bond consultants, architects, and other trained individuals should be used to educate support groups and the community about costs, etc. (Sample of bond consultant information can be found in Appendix G.)

8. Print materials, such as brochures, flyers, question and answer sheets, should be utilized to disseminate important information. (Samples can be found in Appendix E.)

9. Individuals and concerned organizations should work to amend state statute to allow passage of a school bond issue with a simple majority (50%). In some cases, the 60 percent level is unrealistic.

10. School officials should investigate state laws that may allow a lower approval level for school renovation and construction if they are combined with facilities operated by other governmental agencies.

11. Further studies should be done that utilize the exploratory data analysis research technique. These studies should uncover the second level information that would assist school officials in dealing with existing constraints on programs to expand educational programs, facilities, and technologies necessary to meet the demands of preparing students for the information-based society.

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APPENDIXES

Appendix A:
South Dakota Codified Laws

Appendix B:
Commentary On—and Glossary for—Short Course About Exploratory Data Analysis

Appendix C:
Effective School Finance Campaigns

Appendix D:
Letter to Superintendents

Appendix E:
Interview Scripts for Factors Affecting Bond Issue Campaigns

Appendix F:
Representative Samples of Print Materials

Appendix G:
Bond Consultant Sample Information

Appendix A
South Dakota Codified Laws

6-8B-2. Election required for issuance. Unless otherwise provided, no bonds may be issued either for general or special purposes by any public body unless at an election sixty percent of voters of the public body voting upon the question vote in favor of issuing the bonds. The election shall be held in the manner described by law for other elections of the public body.

6-8B-3. Resolution or ordinance declaring necessity of bond issue-Contents-Election. If it is determined by the governing body to be necessary or expedient for any public body to issue its bonds the governing body at a regular meeting thereof or a special meeting duly called may by resolution or ordinance declare the necessity thereof and may submit the question of the issuance of bonds to the voters of the public body at any annual election or at a special election called for that purpose. The resolution or ordinance shall set forth clearly the purpose for which the bonds are to be issued and the maximum amount of the bonds. The resolution or ordinance may also include the maximum rate of interest which they draw, and the maximum time within which they shall become due and payable or other matters the governing body determines relevant to the bond issue.

6-8B-4. Notice of election. The governing body shall publish notice of the election once each week for two consecutive weeks in all official newspapers designated by the public body or if there is no official newspaper, a newspaper of general circulation serving the public body. The second notice shall be published at least twenty days before the election.
Notice shall state the maximum amount of bonds to be issued, the purpose for which bonds are to be issued, and other matters the governing body determines to be necessary.

6-8B-5. Ballot form. The ballots shall have printed thereon substantially the same language as is included in the notice of election, and there shall be printed the words "Shall the above proposition be approved and the bonds issued?" with the words "Yes" and "No" printed immediately at the left thereof, each preceded by a square or circle wherein the voter shall make a cross(x) or check mark (✓) before the word "Yes" for voting in favor of the proposition, or a cross(x) or check mark (✓) in the square or circle before the word "No" for voting against the same.

6-8B-6. Improvement-Authorization of bonds for purchase or construction-Expenditures authorized. The question of the issuance of bonds for the purchase or the construction of any building, facility or improvement may be treated and submitted as a single proposition, and the governing body may determine, if bonds are authorized, whether the purchase or the construction thereof will better serve the interests of the public body. The authorization of bonds for the purpose of purchase or construction of any building, facility or improvement includes the authorization to expend the proceeds for any equipment and furnishings, the purchase of any land, and the payment of all fees and expenses reasonably necessary to complete the building, facility or improvement for the purpose intended. Expenditures for the above purposes need not be included in any annual appropriation ordinance of the public body.

6-8B-7. School, street or utility improvements-Authorization of bonds. The question of the issuance of bonds for the purchase, construction or improvements to school buildings, streets or to any plant and distribution system owned and operated by the public body for the furnishing of utility services may be submitted as a single proposition, without specification of the amount to be expended on each improvement.

6-8B-8. Issuance of bonds on approval by voters. If the requisite percentage of the voters cast their vote in favor of bond issue, the governing body without further act may issue bonds to the amount voted for and sell and negotiate the same.

6-8B-9. Issuance, form and terms of bonds. Bonds may be issued in one or more series, may bear the date or dates and mature at the time or times and in the amounts as the governing body may provide, except that no bond may mature more than fifty years from the date of its issue. The bonds may bear interest at the rate or rates, payable on the date or dates, may be issued in the denominations, carry the registration privileges, be executed in the manner, be payable in the medium of payment, at the place or places within or without the state, and be subject to redemption, prior to maturity, at the times and prices as the governing body may provide. Bonds may be issued in registered form and shall be so issued when necessary under federal law and regulations as the condition for the exemption of the interest thereon from federal income taxation; or otherwise may be issued in bearer form, with coupons attached representing the interest payable thereon, or may be issued in form permitting registration of ownership or principal only.

6-8B-10. Public or private sale-Notice and procedure for public sale. The governing body may sell its bonds at a public or private sale at the price or prices the governing body determines. If the governing body determines to sell bonds at a public sale, no bonds may be sold until the sale has been advertised once a week for at least two successive weeks the first publication being at least ten days before the sale in the official newspaper of the public body, and if directed by the governing body, in any other newspaper or publication. The notice of sale shall describe the bond issue, the time and place of sale, the method of competitive bidding, which method may describe different forms or alternative forms of bids, and the place where bids will be received.

6-8B-11. Single issue of bonds separately approved. Bonds separately voted for two or more purposes may be sold and delivered as a single issue if the governing body determines.

6-8B-12. Interest rate. The maximum allowable interest rate for bonds issued by a public body may be whatever rate the governing body prescribes.

6-8B-13. Disposition of proceeds. The proceeds derived from the sale of any bonds shall be kept as a special fund apart from the other funds of the public body and shall be used exclusively for the purpose for which the bonds were issued.

6-8B-14. Negotiable investment security status. All bonds issued by any public body are negotiable investment securities within the meaning of chapter 57A-8.

Appendix B

Commentary on – and Glossary for – Short Course About Exploratory Data Analysis

Based largely on J.W. Tukey's Exploratory Data Analysis, 1970/71. Addison-Wesley Publishing Company.

This short course does not exist to make the case that exploratory data analysis is useful. Rather it exists to expose its participants to a considerable variety of techniques for looking more effectively at one's data. The examples are not intended to be complete case histories. Rather, they show isolated techniques in action on real data. The emphasis is on general techniques rather than specific problems.

A basic problem about data is to make it more easily and effectively handlable by minds – our minds, her mind, his mind. To this general end:

* anything that makes a simpler description possible makes the description more easily handlable.
* anything that looks below the previously described surface makes the description more effective.

So we shall always be glad (a) to simplify description and (b) to describe one-layer deeper.

In particular:

* to be able to say that we looked one layer deeper and found nothing is a definite step forward (though not as far as to be able to say that we looked deeper and saw thus and such).
* to be able to say that if we change our point of view things are simpler is always a gain (though not quite as much as to say that if we don't bother to change our point of view (some other) things are equally simple).

In this last connection, we regard learning that log pressure is almost a straight line in the negative reciprocal of absolute temperature is a real gain, as compared to saying that pressure increases with temperature at an ever-growing rate. Equally we regard being able to say that a batch of values is roughly symmetrically distributed on a log scale is much better than to say that the raw values have a very skew distribution.

* In rating ease of description, after almost any reasonable change of point of view, as very important, we are essentially asserting a

> belief in quantitative knowledge—a belief that most of the key questions in our world sooner or later demand answers to "by how much?" rather than to "in which direction?"

Consistent with this view, we believe, is a clear demand that pictures should force their messages upon us. Pictures of reassurance—"security blankets"—are frequently not worth the space they take. Pictures that have to be gone over with a reading glass to see the main point are wasteful of time and inadequate of effect. The greatest value of a picture is when it forces us to notice what we never expected to see.

We shall not take time trying to say why specific techniques are the ones to use. Besides pressure of time, there are specific reasons for this. Many of the techniques are less than ten years old in the present form. It is most unlikely that all are beyond improvement, and where a technique is very good, it is not at all certain that we know why it is. And in the few cases where we know a technique is very good, and we believe we know exactly why this is so, why will the use do better in its use for knowing this why?

We have tried to be reasonably consistent wherever this seemed reasonable and not where it doesn't. Apparent consistency helps with easy learning and correct remembering, but ought not be allowed to outweigh noticeable differences in performance.

In summary, then we:

- present techniques, not case histories.
- regard simple descriptions as good in themselves.
- feel free to ask for changes in point of view in order to gain such simplicity.
- regard every description (always incomplete!) as something to be lifted off and looked under.
- will leave most interpretations of results to whomever are experts in the subject-matter field involved.
- regard consistency from one technique to another as desirable, not essential.

John W. Tukey
August 10, 1975

Appendix C

Effective School Finance Campaigns

by J.E. Swalm

As printed in *School Leader* 16(4): 24–26

Here's a checklist of preparations that should be completed by election day, whether the functions are undertaken by a school district or by independent citizens committees. A reminder – boards of education and school districts may be constrained by certain legal limitations. Independent citizen committees are permitted more leeway. Be sure to check with your board attorney to be certain that your board and district do not violate state law.

___Development of a carefully planned strategy, based upon statistical analysis and critique of past campaigns.
___Canvassing of voters by independent citizens committee (house-to-house or by telephone) to promote support and to identify "yes" voters.
___Other "yes" voters identified by citizens committee, from records and research (such as parents, staff members, recent grads, high school seniors, parents of incoming kindergartners, etc.)
___Voter registration campaign conducted.
___Volunteer committee set up to offer baby-sitting services and rides to the polls. Publicize these services appropriately.
___Arrangements completed for absentee ballots for the ill, elderly, out-of-town students and other members of the community who will be unable to make it to the polls.
___A crew of "poll watchers" recruited by the citizens committee for each polling place. (These are citizens committee *volunteers* – completely separate from the districts' election workers, who are paid and neutral.)
___Telephone squad arranged for election day by citizens committee.
___Central election headquarters set up and staffed with knowledgeable resource persons, who are aware of the election law and procedures.
___Polling places arranged (if possible, in school buildings).
___Trained election workers assigned.

___Equipment checked out and working properly.

On Election Day

___Citizens committee campaign coverage at each poll.

___A poll watcher at every polling place (who gets appropriate relief, lunch and breaks and has access to the telephone, or is visited by a courier regularly during the day).

___Two sets of voter lists for every poll watcher (with the "yes" voters already carefully designated).

___Poll watchers check off the "yes" voters as they cast their ballots.

___About two hours before the polls close, one set of lists is picked up and distributed to the telephone squad.

___The citizens committee's telephone squad then calls each "yes" voter who has not yet voted, to urge participation in a positive way and to offer rides and baby-sitting.

___Due to the rush, telephone squad volunteers should be expected to contact no more than about 15 voters each.

___Scripts or outlines can be prepared in advance to make sure all messages are conveyed and calls move along quickly.

___The poll watchers complete the second list and return it later to the coordinator so that a finished record of voting is compiled for each voting district.

___Results are gathered at election headquarters, with all volunteers joining the get-together as they complete their assignments.

___Serve refreshments and encourage camaraderie.

___Have tally sheets ready for those who wish to "keep score," as the counts come in from the districts.

___Provide a chalkboard so that all can watch the results go up together.

___Plan for the news media.

___Invite reporters – or arrange to call them.

___Have a spokesperson available to answer questions or provide commentary to the news media.

___The board and administration should provide staff with the results first thing the next day.

After the Election

___Hold a debriefing. Allow a few days cooling off period first. Then analyze the campaign carefully and critically together, while it is still fresh in your minds.

___Identify and record your least useful approaches.

___Brainstorm new ideas.

___Conduct an informal random sampling of workers and voters. What did they think of your campaign?

___Compile all of your data on voter turnout, analyzing the results hour by hour and district by district. Draw conclusions.

___Compile a complete archival record of the election with all materials possible and appropriate commentary on each: brochures, news releases, bulletins, scripts, slide shows, flyers, clippings.

___Organize their materials and store them away carefully so that they can be used to plan next year's campaign.

___Express your thanks to all volunteers – preferably in a personal note.

___Begin to plan your basic schedule for the upcoming school finance campaign.

Appendix D

Letter to Superintendents

UNIVERSITY of
SOUTH DAKOTA
414 EAST CLARK STREET • VERMILLION, SD 57069-2390

DIVISION OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
(605) 677 - 5260
FAX (605) 677 - 5438

Phil Vik, Chair

Superintendent of Schools
School District
Address
City, State, Zip Code

Dear Superintendent:

As you are aware, passing a school bond issue is a difficult task in any community. As partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education, I am currently researching those factors that have affected the success or failure of recent school bond elections in South Dakota and hope to prepare a handbook for school administrators on the subject. To obtain the necessary data, I will be conducting brief interviews (about 20 minutes) with the superintendent, newspaper editor, member of the citizens committee, and banker in each of four communities that have recently held school bond elections.

Your school district fulfills the requirements I established for subject schools in my study, and I hope that you will be able to assist me. Neither you nor your school district will be identified in the research in connection with any specific reports or publications. Participation in the interviews serves as informed consent for both yourself and other participants.

I am also asking participating superintendents to contact the other three people to be interviewed in their community, as they know those individuals who would probably be able to provide the most relevant information. It would also be helpful in understanding your campaign if these individuals could collect information about the campaign. In particular, I am looking for copies of minutes showing school board approval, letters to the editor, editorials, brochures, buttons, flyers, newsletters, advertising, or any other critical items.

Thank you for your cooperation. I believe the information gathered for this exploratory data analysis will create a valuable handbook for practicing school administrators facing the challenges of school bond issue campaigns. If you have any questions, please contact me at either 582-6375 (office) or 582-3862 (home).

Sincerely,

Carleton R. Holt
Doctoral Candidate

Dr. Floyd Boschee
Advisor

Appendix E

Interview Scripts for Factors Affecting Bond Issue Campaigns

Interviewee: Superintendent of Schools

Interviewer: Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. The information gathered from this interview will be used as part of a doctoral dissertation for the University of South Dakota. Your responses to questions asked in this interview will be used only for purposes of this study and will be kept strictly confidential by the researcher. Your participation in the interview serves as your informed consent. There are two parts to the interview. The first portion deals with the specifics of this particular school bond election, and the second part deals more with your perceptions about the election. The entire interview will last approximately 20 minutes. Do you have any questions? (Answer any questions.)

In this first part of the interview, I will be asking you a series of questions concerning the recent school bond election in your district and recording your responses on this form. The questions for this portion of the interview will ask for specific data about the election campaign. In addition to the specific answers to the questions, I would like you to indicate when you feel the factor being discussed in the question had a critical impact on your bond election campaign. Critical impact is defined as a factor you perceived had a significant impact on the success or failure of a school bond issue campaign.

For example, I might ask you how many people in the community participated in meetings about the bond election. You may feel that either a lack of participation or good participation had a critical impact on the outcome of the election. After giving the appropriate number, you may simply say that you felt this participation had a critical impact. You may indicate that a factor had a critical impact on the election for as many or as few questions as you feel appropriate.

Do you have any questions before I begin? (Answer any questions.)

(If the interviewee wishes to go into depth on the following questions, indicate that you will be returning to some of the same issues during the unstructured portion of the interview.)

	Critical Impact
1. How many dollars were requested in this bond election? _____million	_____
2. Number of YES votes? _____	_____
3. Number of NO votes? _____	_____
4. Percentage of voter turnout? ______%	_____
5. This was the _____attempt at passing this project?	_____
6. What was the Board of Education vote on authorizing this election? __to __	_____
7. On what month, day and year did the public vote occur?_______	_____
8. Was a bond consultant used on this project? Yes or No	_____
9. How many months prior to the election was the architect hired? ___months	_____
10. Other than a bond consultant, was an outside consultant used? Yes or No.	_____
11. What type of facility or combination of facilities was included in this referenda? ____	_____
12. How many square feet were included in this project? _____square feet	_____
13. Was an athletic gymnasium included in this project? Yes or No	_____
14. Was a citizen's group actively promoting this bond election? Yes or No	_____
15. Was a citizen's group actively working against this bond election? Yes or No	_____
16. Was a telephone campaign utilized to inform voters of this bond election? Yes or No	_____

17. Was a door-to-door canvass of the community utilized to promote this issue? Yes or No ______

18. Was a poll watcher utilized? Yes or No ______

19. Were public meetings held to answer questions on this project prior to the election? Yes or No ______

20. What was the proposed bond levy increase that was promoted during the campaign? $______ per $1,000 valuation ______

21. Were there other forms of financing such as capitol outlay certificates or gifts used for the construction debt on this project? Yes or No ______

If yes, please identify.

____

Unstructured Interview

Interviewee: Superintendent of Schools

In this portion of the interview, the interviewer will ask open-ended questions to obtain information as to the interviewee's perceptions of such issues as : 1) the reasons certain factors had an impact on the results of the bond issue; and 2) what advice they would give to others preparing for a bond election. The researcher will follow the techniques developed by Tukey's (1971) exploratory data analysis.

This portion of the interview will include but not be limited to the following questions and will proceed to get in-depth responses to feelings and attitudes about the issue. Follow-up questions might include such responses as: What about that activity do you think was important to the voters? How do you think the voters perceived that type of activity? What outside influences may have had an impact on how that activity was perceived by the voters?

Question 1: Identify in rank order the factors you perceive as having the most impact on the results of this bond issue.

Question 2: What advice would you give to others preparing for a bond issue campaign?

The researcher will record the responses by hand during the conversation.

Script for Structured Interview

Interviewee: Citizens Committee Member

Interviewer: Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. The information gathered from this interview will be used as part of a doctoral dissertation for the University of South Dakota. Your responses to questions asked in this interview will be used only for purposes of this study and will be kept strictly confidential by the researcher. Your participation in the interview will serve as your informed consent. There are two parts to the interview. The first portion deals with the specifics of this particular school bond election, and the second part deals more with your perceptions about the election. The entire interview will last approximately 20 minutes. Do you have any questions? (Answer any questions.)

In this first part of the interview, I will be asking you a series of questions concerning the recent school bond election in your district and recording your responses on this form. The questions for this portion of the interview will ask for specific data about the election campaign. In addition to the answers to the questions, I would like you to indicate when you feel the factor being discussed in the question had a critical impact on your bond election campaign. Critical impact is defined as a factor you preceived had a significant impact on the success or failure of the school bond issue campaign.

For example, I might ask you how many people in the community participated in meetings about the bond election. You may feel that either a lack of participation or good participation had a critical impact on the outcome of the election. After giving the appropriate answer, you may simply say that you felt this participation had a critical impact. You may indicate "critical impact" for as many or as few items as you believe is appropriate.

Do you have any questions before I begin? (Answer any questions.)

(If the interviewee wishes to go into depth on the following questions, indicate that you will be returning to some of the same issues during the unstructured portion of the interview.)

	Critical Impact
1. What type of facility or combination of facilities was included in this referenda? ____________________	______
2. Was an athletic gymnasium included in this project? Yes or No	______
3. Was a citizen's group actively promoting this election? Yes or No	______
4. Was a citizen's group actively working against this project? Yes or No	______
5. Was a telephone campaign utilized to inform voters of this election? Yes or No	______
6. Was a door-to-door canvass of the community utilized to promote this issue? Yes or No	______
7. Was a poll watcher utilized? Yes or No	______
8. Were public meetings held to answer questions on this project prior to the election? Yes or No	______
9. How were you selected to serve on the citizen's committee?	______
10. What was the makeup of the membership of this committee?	______
11. What activities did your committee utilize?	______
12. How did the committee determine their activities?	______
13. How were funds obtained to finance your efforts?	______

Unstructured Interview

Interviewee: Citizens Committee Member

In this portion of the interview, the interviewer will ask open-ended questions to obtain information as to the interviewee's perception of such issues as : 1) the reasons certain factors had an impact on the results of the bond issue; and 2) what advice they would give to others preparing for a bond election, and 3) the most difficult challenges of the campaign. The researcher will follow the techniques developed by Tukey's (1971) exploratory data analysis.

This portion of the interview will include but not be limited to the following questions and will proceed to get in-depth responses to feelings and attitudes about the issue. Follow-up questions might include such responses as: What about that activity do you think was important to the voters? How do you think the voters perceived that type of activity? What outside influences may have had an impact on how that activity was perceived by the voters?

Question 1: Identify in rank order the factors you perceive as having the most impact on the results of this bond issue.

Question 2: What activities do you feel contributed to "yes" voters coming to the polls?

Question 3: What advice would you give to others preparing for a bond issue campaign?

The researcher will record the responses by hand during the conversation.

Script for Structured Interview

Interviewee: Newspaper Editor

Interviewer: Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. The information gathered from this interview will be used as part of a doctoral dissertation for the University of South Dakota. Your responses to questions asked in this interview will be used only for purposes of this study and will be kept strictly confidential by the researcher. Your participation in this interview serves as informed consent. There are two parts to the interview. The first portion deals with the specifics of this particular school bond election, and the second part deals more with your perceptions about the election. The entire interview will last approximately 20 minutes. Do you have any questions? (Answer any questions.)

In this first part of the interview, I will be asking you a series of questions concerning the recent school bond election in your district and recording your responses on this form. The questions for this portion of the interview will ask for specific data about the election campaign. In addition to the answers to the questions, I would like you to indicate when you feel the factor being discussed in the question had a critical impact on your bond election campaign. Critical impact is defined as a factor you preceived had a significant impact on the success or failure of a school bond issue campaign.

For example, I might ask you how many people in the community participated in meetings about the election. You may feel that either a lack of participation or good participation had a critical impact on the outcome of the election. After giving the appropriate answer, you may simply say that you felt this participation had a critical impact. You may indicate "critical impact" for as many or as few items as you believe is appropriate.

Do you have any questions before I begin? (Answer any questions.)

(If the interviewee wishes to go into depth on the following questions, indicate that you will be returning to some of the same issues during the unstructured portion of the interview and that you will be recording his or her responses at that time.)

Critical Impact

1. What type of facility or combination of facilities was included in this referenda? ______

   ____

2. Was an athletic gymnasium included in this project? Yes or No ______
3. Was a citizen's group actively promoting this election? Yes or No ______
4. Was a citizen's group actively working against this project? Yes or No ______
5. Was a telephone campaign utilized to inform voters of this election? Yes or No ______
6. Was a door-to-door canvass of the community utilized to promote this issue? Yes or No ______
7. Was a poll watcher utilized? Yes or No ______
8. Did you receive letters to the editor supporting the bond issue? Yes or No ______
9. What was the major reason these writers supported the issue? ______
10. Did you receive letters to the editor opposing the bond issue? Yes or No ______
11. What was the major reason these writers opposed the issue? ______
12. Did you or a member of your staff write an editorial on the bond issue? Yes or No ______
13. Did the editorial support or oppose the bond issue? ______

Unstructured Interview

Interviewee: Newspaper Editor

In this portion of the interview, the interviewer will ask open-ended questions to obtain information as to the interviewee's perception of such issues as : 1) the reasons certain factors had an impact on the results of the bond issue; and 2) what advice they would give to others preparing for a bond election; and 3) what was the general attitude of the community. The researcher will follow the techniques developed by Tukey's (1971) exploratory data analysis.

This portion of the interview will include but not be limited to the following questions and will proceed to get in-depth responses to feelings and attitudes about the issue. Follow-up questions might include such responses as: What about that activity do you think was important to the voters? How do you think the voters perceived that type of activity? What outside influences may have had an impact on how that activity was perceived by the voters?

Question 1: Identify in rank order the factors you perceive as having the most impact on the results of this bond issue.

Question 2: What did you perceive was the attitude of the general public to the bond issue?

Question 3: What advice would you give to others preparing for a bond issue campaign?

The researcher will record responses by hand during the conversation.

Script for Structured Interview

Interviewee: Banker

Interviewer: Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. The information gathered from this interview will be used as part of a doctoral dissertation for the University of South Dakota. Your responses to questions asked in this interview will be used only for purposes of this study and will be kept strictly confidential by the researcher. Your participation in this interview will serve as informed consent. There are two parts to the interview. The first portion deals with the specifics of this particular school bond election, and the second part deals more with your perceptions about the election. The entire interview will last approximately 20 minutes. Do you have any questions? (Answer any questions.)

In this first part of the interview, I will be asking you a series of questions concerning the recent school bond election in your district and recording your responses on this form. The questions for this portion of the interview will ask for specific data about the election campaign. In addition to the answers to the questions, I would like you to indicate when you feel the factor being discussed in the question had a critical impact on your bond election campaign. Critical impact is defined as a factor you perceived had a significant impact on the success or failure of the school bond issue campaign

For example, I might ask you how many people in the community participated in meetings about the election. You may feel that either a lack of participation or good participation had a critical impact on the outcome of the election. After giving the appropriate answer, you may simply say that you felt this participation had a critical impact. You may indicate "critical impact" for as many or as few items as you believe is appropriate.

Do you have any questions before I begin? (Answer any questions.)

(If the interviewee wishes to go into depth on the following questions, indicate that you will be returning to some of the same issues during the unstructured portion of the interview and that you will be recording his/her responses at that time.)

	Critical Impact
1. What type of facility or combination of facilities was included in this referenda? ________________________________	________
2. Was an athletic gymnasium included in this project? Yes or No	________
3. Was a citizen's group actively promoting this election? Yes or No	________
4. Was a citizen's group actively working against this project? Yes or No	________
5. Was a telephone campaign utilized to inform voters of this election? Yes or No	________
6. Was a door-to-door canvass of the community utilized to promote this issue? Yes or No	________
7. Was a poll watcher utilized? Yes or No	________
8. Were public meetings held to answer questions on this project prior to the election? Yes or No	________
9. Were you consulted by citizens concerning the financial feasibility of the bond issue? Yes or No	________

Unstructured Interview

Interviewee: Banker

In this portion of the interview, the interviewer will ask open-ended questions to obtain information about the interviewee's perceptions of such issues as: 1) the reasons certain factors had an impact on the results of the bond issue; and 2) what advice they would give to others preparing for a bond election; and 3) what was the general attitude of the community; 4) the general state of the local economy at the time of the election; and 5) the impact of the results of the bond election on the business climate of the community. The researcher will follow the techniques developed by Tukey's (1971) exploratory data analysis.

This portion of the interview will include but not be limited to the following questions and will proceed to get in-depth responses to feelings and attitudes about the issue. Follow-up questions might include such responses as: What about that activity do you think was important to the voters? How do you think the voters perceived that type of activity? What influences may have had an impact on how that activity was perceived by the voters?

Question 1: Identify in rank order the factors you perceive as having the most impact on the results of this bond issue.

Question 2: What did you perceive was the attitude of the general public to the bond issue?

Question 3: What was the general state of economy in this community at the time of this election?

Question 4: What was the impact of the bond issue on the business climate of the community?

Question 5: What advice would you give to others preparing for a bond issue campaign?

The researcher will record responses by hand during the conversation.

Appendix F

Representative Samples of Print Materials

WHERE CAN MORE INFORMATION BE OBTAINED?

Several speakers are available to visit with interested district residents at events scheduled specifically to discuss the school bond issue at regularly scheduled organization meetings. In addition, open houses have been scheduled at each of five elementary schools. Watch for announcements concerning these dates.

TO SCHEDULE SPEAKERS CALL

-

Publicity Committee

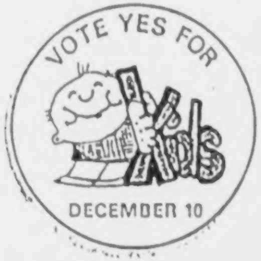
-

Program Committee

FOR GENERAL INFORMATION CONTACT

-

Elementary School
Needs Committee Chairman



TUESDAY, DECEMBER 10, 1985

VOTER REGISTRATION DEADLINE
November 25, 1985

Elementary School Needs
Committee
Chm.

STAMP

Vote Yes For

School Bond Issue

Tuesday December 10

Provided to you by
**Elementary School
Needs Committee**

WHY DO WE NEED TO BUILD?

To fully understand the scope of the reasons, we need to look at the total elementary school situation as it exists today and also project our thinking into the future.

PRESENT STATUS OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

- ⇨ School is structurally unsafe
- ⇨ Classrooms are overcrowded
- ⇨ Students are attending classes in a church basement
- ⇨ Rooms for libraries, music, computer labs and physical education do not exist at this time
- ⇨ Facilities to provide special services education are inadequate or not available

FUTURE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL NEEDS

- ⇨ Census figures indicate enrollment will increase by nearly 100 students in grades K-5 by 1988
- ⇨ With economic development underway new jobs and the resulting families will further increase classroom needs

HOW WOULD THE PROPOSED BOND ISSUE SOLVE THE PROBLEM?

The needs of each of current elementary schools have been considered and the building project designed to provide the district's residents with four comprehensive education centers that are adequate to meet both current and future educational demands.

- **Schools**
  Construct an addition at the . site that will accommodate the combined and school enrollments K-6,
- **School**
  Build additional classrooms to accommodate the current enrollment and future needs for K-6,
- **K-6 and K-5 Schools**
  Add multipurpose rooms to make each facility capable of offering a comprehensive educational experience. Change existing space to allow the students full access to special services education.

WHAT WILL THE PROPOSED PROJECT COST?

There are several ways to look at the answer to this very important question. Each of us prefers to think of cost differently.

*TOTAL PROJECT COST –
$4.85 million

*MILL LEVY NEEDED TO RETIRE BONDS –
4.44 mills for up to 20 years

*COST PER MONTH –
$8.61 on a home with a full market value of $60,000

*COST PER DAY –
About 30 cents
(less than the cost of a candy bar)

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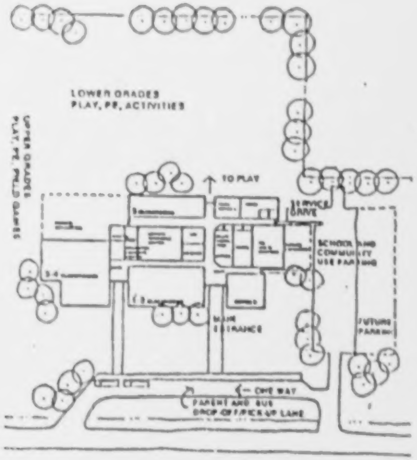
What will the schools look like?

One school will be a four-section school--4 classes of each grade. The other school will be 3 classes of each grade level. Future expansions will be possible at both of the sites.

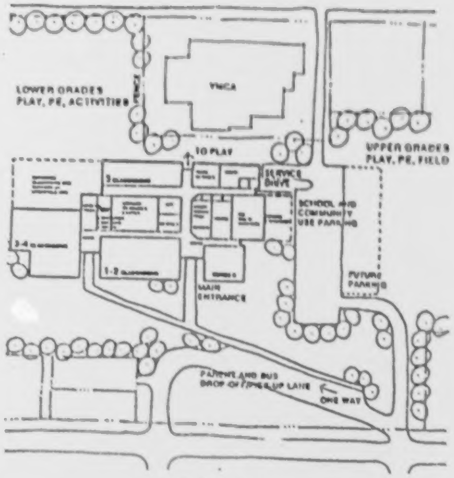
South Location


LOWER GRADES PLAY, PE, ACTIVITIES
UPPER GRADES PLAY, PE, FIELD GAMES
TO PLAY
SERVICE DRIVE
SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY USE PARKING
FUTURE PARKING
MAIN ENTRANCE
ONE WAY
PARENT AND BUS DROP OFF/PICK UP LANE

Preliminary Plans

kids
Keep Improving District Schools

North Location


YMCA
LOWER GRADES PLAY, PE, ACTIVITIES
UPPER GRADES PLAY, PE, FIELD
TO PLAY
SERVICE DRIVE
SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY USE PARKING
FUTURE PARKING
MAIN ENTRANCE
PARENT AND BUS DROP OFF/PICK UP LANE
ONE WAY

Preliminary Plans

Can I vote If I'm going to be gone?

Absentee ballots can be obtained at the School District Administration Office at Street between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. from now until June 25.

PLEASE VOTE

ON JUNE 26, 1990

kids

Keep

Improving

District

Schools

School District
Bond Election

Tuesday, June 26, 1990

Where to Vote

Wards 1, 4, townships

Wards 2, 3 --

8:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.

If you need a ride to the polls on June 26, call

What is the bond election?

The bond election passage would allow the school board to issue up to $6.995 million in bonds to build two new elementary schools. The schools would be for students in grades K-5. The schools would replace

Why is it necessary to build new schools?

The three schools that would be replaced by the two new ones are in poor condition and would not meet present state guidelines and codes, nor do they accommodate the present curriculum, programs, and enrollment.

INADEQUATE WIRING
TOO FEW CLASSROOMS
INADEQUATE CLASSROOM SIZE
NO LUNCH ROOMS
NO STAGES IN TWO SCHOOLS
INADEQUATE HANDICAP ACCESSIBILITY
UNSAFE ACCESS TO AREAS OF SCHOOLS FOR STUDENTS
ENERGY INEFFICIENT
INADEQUATE FACILITIES FOR SPECIAL CLASSES
LIMITED UTILIZATION OF STAFF
HAZARDOUS ACCESS TO SCHOOL SITES

What would it cost to renovate the existing buildings?

If the buildings were to be renovated, they would have to meet current state codes and guidelines:

	Estimated Range		
to meet fire codes	$365,000	to	$415,000
make handicap accessible	410,000	to	515,000
make energy efficient	555,000	to	710,000
upgrade classrooms and equipment	1,210,000	to	1,500,00
upgrade electrical and mechanical services	800,000	to	1,030,000
add square footage	4,770,000	to	5,440,000
	8,110,000		9,610,000

The cost to renovate the existing buildings is $8.110 -- $9.610 million.

How much will it cost me?

The cost is $2.47 per $1,000 of the true and full assessed valuation of your property. The average resident in will pay $75.00 per year for the new schools

The following table illustrates tax dollar requirements at various property values to support this building program based on a reasonably projected increase in the District's true and full valuation

Non-Agricultural Land Values

Assessed (True & Full) Valuation	Net Dollars Per $1,000 of Valuation Levy Increase	Net Annual Tax Increase	Net Monthly Tax Increase
$10,000	$2.47	$24.70	$2.06
30,000	$2.47	74.10	6.18
50,000	$2.47	123.50	10.29
75,000	$2.47	185.25	15.44

Agricultural Land Values (Per Quarter of Land)

$/Acre	Assessed Valuation	Net Dollars Per $1,000 of Valuation Levy Increase	Net Annual Tax Increase (Per Qtr.)	Net Annual Tax Increase (Per Acre)
$100/acre	$16,000	$2.47	$39.52	$ .25
$200/acre	$32,000	$2.47	$79.04	$ .49

To calculate your own tax obligation to support this new building program, you find the true and full valuation on your individual property tax statement and multiply that number by .00247.

For example:	$30,000	true and full value of a typical residence
	x.00247	levy increase
	$74.10	actual annual tax dollars for new buildings

This levy will be reduced if the District's full and true valuation increases. The levy will decrease if lower interest rates occur in the future.

Payments cannot increase once the bonds are issued.

MANY SENIOR CITIZENS AND DISABLED PERSONS MAY QUALIFY FOR A REFUND OF THEIR TAXES. Contact your county assessor's office.

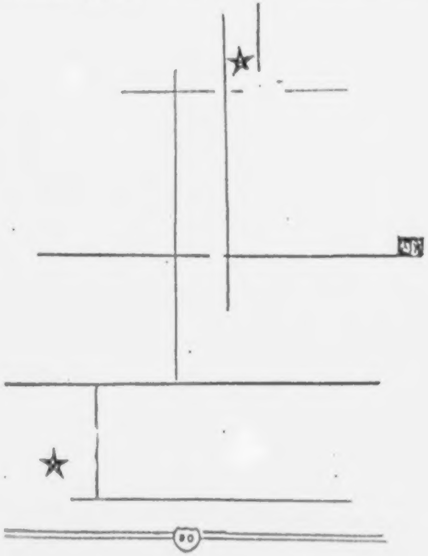
Why is it important to build now?

Putting off building new schools costs money. Experts say inflation raises the cost of the proposed project by $1,000 per day or $365,000 annually.

Interest rates are reasonable at this time. No one can predict what interest rates will do in the future.

Where will the schools be located?

Sites for the two new facilities will be at Street and Avenue and between 12th and 14th Avenues on Street. The new locations are indicated by the stars.



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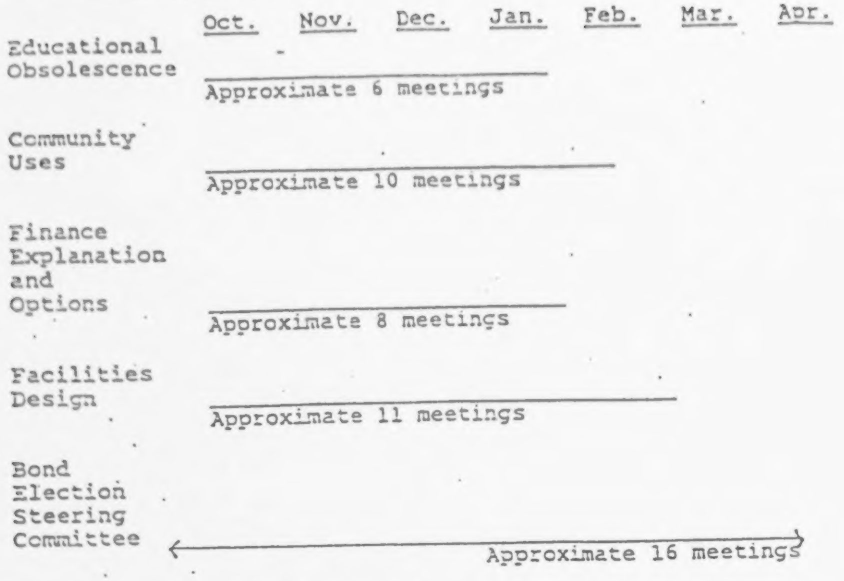
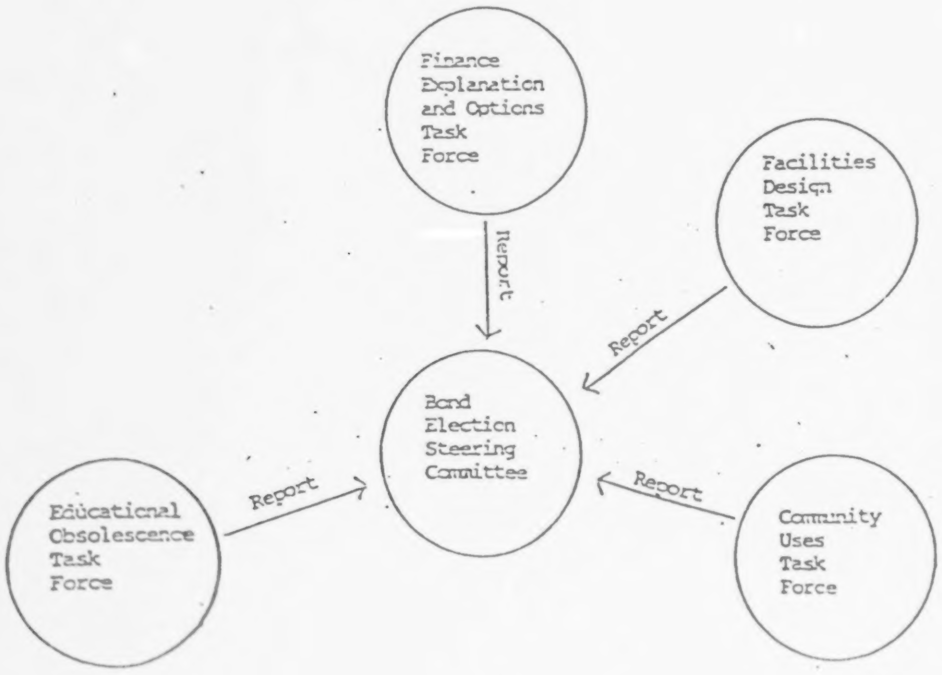
TASK FORCE TIME LINES



INFORMATION COORDINATION BETWEEN STEERING COMMITTEE AND TASK FORCES


Finance Explanation and Options Task Force
Facilities Design Task Force
Report
Report
Bond Election Steering Committee
Educational Obsolescence Task Force
Report
Report
Community Uses Task Force

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EDUCATIONAL OBSOLESCENCE TASK FORCE

Mission: Review current and future instructional programming to identify limitations caused by current facilities.

Objectives: 1. Identify, by example, instructional limitations the facilities present to the following curriculum areas:

a. Reading
b. Language Arts (spelling, handwriting, English)
c. Social Studies
d. Science
e. Math
f. Health
g. Art
h. Physical Education
i. Counseling
j. Special Education
k. Library

2. Identify, by example, instructional limitations the facilities present to the use of technology in the curriculum and classroom.

3. Develop a report on the topic to be presented to the school board, the media, and the general public.

4. Identify committee members available to speak to this topic at civic clubs, to interested groups, the media, etc.

Potential Resource Persons:

1. Elementary teachers and specialists
2. Elementary principals
3. College professors of education
4. Central Administration.

District Coordinator: , Principal

Proposed time line meeting twice a month:

October	November	December	January
Begin →			Report to board first of January

6 Meetings

COMMUNITY USES TASK FORCE

Mission: Research potential community groups (public or private) who may have current or future facility needs that may be incorporated into joint use arrangements with new elementary school facilities.

Objectives; 1. Identify public or private groups that have current or future facility needs.

2. Contact each identified group to determine if meeting for joint planing is desirable.

3. Conduct planning meetings with interested groups to develop needs and scope of community use facilities.

4. Provide details of desirable joint use spaces for consideration to Facilities Design Task Force.

5. Hold public meetings to provide information and receive feedback on identified joint use possibilities.

6. Develop final recommendations to Facilities Design Task Force and Board of Education on the viable community use options and the potential of using shared resources.

7. Identify committee members available to speak to this topic at civic clubs, to interested groups, the media, etc.

Potential Resource Persons:

1. , City Manager
2. Senior Citizen Center Director
3. RSVP Director
4. Executive Director of YMCA
5. Board Members of YMCA
6. City Council Members
7. Dir. of City Parks and Recreation Dept.
8. School Board Members
9. County Officials
10. National Guard Officials
11. Anyone else the task force feels appropriate.

District Coordinator:

Superintendent

Proposed time line meeting twice a month:

October November December January February

FINANCE EXPLANATION AND OPTIONS TASK FORCE

Mission: Develop comprehensive understandable explanation of the finance options for capital improvements, the effects on local sources (property taxes), and the short and long term effects of new construction versus maintaining the status quo.

Objectives: 1. Review the sources of revenue currently available for total district operations.

2. Review sources of revenue available for capital projects.

3. Identify the most appropriate finance option or options for new construction.

4. Review effects of tax abatement program on next 5 to 10 years taxable valuation and its relationship to property tax levies.

5. Identify potential cost savings in new construction and reducing from 4 sites to 3 sites.

6. Identify effects of past and future legislative actions on school finance structure.

7. Develop written report suitable for distribution to school board, the media and general public.

8. Identify committee members available to speak to this topic at civic clubs, to interested community groups, and to the media.

Potential Resource Persons:

1. School District Business Office Personnel
2. School District Administrative Staff
3.
4. State Representatives and Senator
5. Financial Institutions Personnel

District Coordinator:
School Business Manager

Proposed time line meeting twice a month:

October	November	December	January	February
Start →				Report to Board first of Feb.

BOND CAMPAIGN STEERING COMMITTEE

Mission: Identify and coordinate necessary tasks leading up to the bond election day.

Objectives: 1. Recruit volunteers to distribute information, make phone calls, provide transportation, and other related services for a bond election.

2. Organize and coordinate efforts to improve voter registration and voter turn out.

3. Identify information from the other task forces to use in the bond election campaign.

4. Organize, coordinate, and raise funds for publicity program for bond election.

5. Report finalized plans for the campaign to the Board of Education.

Potential resource persons:

1. Members of previous bond election committees.
2. Parents
3. Non-parents
4. facilities consultant
5. School staff and administration

District Coordinator: , Assistant Principal

Proposed time line meeting initial twice a month and weekly eight weeks before election. Also, this is dependent on actual bond election date.

February March April

Start ————————————→ Bond Election?

10 Meetings

FACILITIES DESIGN TASK FORCE

Mission: Develop detailed schematic designs, building elevations, and site layouts consistent with identified educational specifications, potential community use options, pedestrian and traffic safety and utilizing construction dollars in an efficient manner while maintaining quality.

Objectives: 1. Identify interested teaching staff to provide input and serve on task force.

2. Review the previously developed educational specifications for utilization in design.

3. Incorporate potential community use options in design. (Information will be provided from Community Use Task Force.)

4. Develop sufficient detail on building and site layout to proceed to specification development.

5. Identify desirable construction elements to be cost effective, provide quality, and be serviceable for 60 to 80 years.

6. Make recommendations to the Board of Education for their consideration and final approval.

7. Develop visual presentation for the media and public.

8. Identify committee members available to speak at civic clubs, to interested groups, the media, etc.

Potential Resource Persons:
1. Elementary Faculty.
2. Elementary Administrators.
3. Facilities Consultant.
4. City Engineer

District Coordinator: , Principal

Proposed time line meeting twice a month:

October	November	December	January	February	March
Start →					Report to Board first of March

11 Meetings

BOND ELECTION

SCHOOL DISTRICT

I. Study - January 1988 through March 1990 (27 months)
   - A. In-House Growth Task Force
   - B. Expanded Growth Task Force
   - C. Board Study/Decision

II. Selection of Consultants - April/May 1990
   - A. Architect
   - B. Financial

III. Planning/Programming/Design Pre-Election - May 1990 to Oct 1990.

IV. Election - October 9, 1991
   - A. Marketing Election - August through October 9, 1990

V. Design Development - October 1990 through April 1991 (7 months)
   - A. Construction Documents
   - B. State and Local Review
   - C. Bidding
   - D. Contract Execution

VI. Construction - May 1991 through August 1992 (16 months)

VII. Occupancy - September 1992

January 1988 through September 1992 (57 months)

SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 17-2

Canvasser Instruction Sheet
March 6, 1990 School Bond Election

Before Going to the Door

1. Read the fact sheets
2. Make sure you have your fact sheets, 3x5 voter card and a pen.

At the Door

1. Introduce yourself, saying you are a volunteer distributing information about the March 6, 1990 school bond election. Remember that you are not asking them how they will vote.
2. Encourage them to read the material carefully and VOTE! Never argue with anyone you visit, your time is much better spent being brief. Always use a positive approach.
3. Ask if they have any questions. If you are not sure of the answer to a question you are asked, encourage the person to call the superintendent's office at a board member, or anyone on the KIDS Communication Committee.
4. Ask if everyone in their home who is eligible to vote is registered. If they are not registered they must go to the county auditor's office to register by February 19, 1990.
5. Absentee Ballot: If a person wishes to vote absentee they may get an absentee ballot at the school district's business manager's office and must request the ballot in writing. The absentee ballot must be returned to the business manager's office by 3:00 p.m. on March 6.
6. Do not leave brochures in mail boxes - this is against postal rules.

On Your Way to the Next Home

1. Record your impression on the 3x5 voter card.
2. Write down a general description of questions asked.

February 8 (On or Before)

1. Sort cards into yes, no, undecided.
2. Put rubber band around each category and return in your envelope to your area coordinator. The building coordinator will need the envelopes by February 9 for a review meeting.

Follow-Up

Another large group meeting will be held in late February and a second canvass will be scheduled 10 to 14 days before the election. The second canvass will distribute a question/answer brochure with the most commonly asked questions and the appropriate response. The second canvass will also be to remind people to vote.

Thank you very much for your support and willingness to canvass to help the KIDS of the   School District.

INSTRUCTION FOR THE PARENTS' WHO CARE PHONE COMMITTEE

1. IDENTIFY IF YOU HAVE THE CORRECT INDIVIDUAL.
   "Hello, is this the Smith residence?"

2. IDENTIFY YOURSELF AND ORGANIZATION.
   "I'm Sue and I'm calling for the Parents' Who Care Phone Committee."

3. INFORM THEM THAT THE ELECTION IS COMING UP ON OCTOBER 9.
   "Did you know that the Bond Election for the new middle school will be on October 9, this next Tuesday, at the from 8AM to 7PM ?"

4. DETERMINE IF THEY ARE PLANNING ON VOTING.
   "Are you planning on voting on this issue?"

5. DETERMINE IF THEY HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT THE ISSUE.
   "Do you have any questions about the bond issue?"

6. DIRECT THEM TO MEETINGS OR PLACES THAT HAVE PAMPHLETS ABOUT THE BOND ISSUE.
   "There are several meetings this week that would help answer any of your questions:

1-2PM	Monday	Formal Presentation
10-10:30	Tuesday	Question-Answer
2-2:30	Tuesday	Question-Answer
10-10:30	Wednesday	Question-Answer
10-10:30	Thursday	Question-Answer
10-10:30	Friday	Question-Answer

   "All the schools, medical and dental facilities, the grocery stores, and the Chamber have the brochures answering questions about the new school and how it would affect us."

7. DETERMINE IF THEY ARE IN FAVOR OR AGAINST THE NEW SCHOOL.
   "Can we count on your support for the new school?"

8. MARK ALL POSITIVE RESPONCES.

9. TUESDAY RECALL ALL THE POSITIVE RESPONCES AND ASK IF THEY HAVE VOTED YET. REMIND THEM WHERE TO GO TO VOTE. THIS IS CRITICAL! CALL ESPECIALLY FROM 3-7PM. THIS WILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

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Appendix G
Bond Consultant Sample Information

**Kirkpatrick, Pettis,
Smith, Polian Inc.**
Investment Bankers
A Mutual of Omaha Company

10250 Regency Circle, Suite 200
Omaha, NE 68114 • 402/397-5777

January 15, 1993

Mr. Carleton Holt, Superintendent
Brandon Valley School District #49-2
301 S. Splitrock Blvd.
Brandon, SD 57005-1651

Dear Superintendent Holt:

I appreciate the opportunity to send you the enclosed information which explains the services provided by a fiscal agent/bond underwriter for a school district seeking capital improvement program financing.

I think the question/answer format that I developed presents the information in a clear, concise manner. As a former school superintendent myself, I had the advantage of ascertaining what it is that a school administrator wants or needs to know about the services of a fiscal agent/bond underwriter.

I am also enclosing the form of a letter contract that we generally use with school districts. It also outlines the services provided, expenses of an issue, and fees for the services.

I hope that this information is helpful to you. Again, thank you for this opportunity!

Sincerely,

Darwin Reider
First Vice President

DR/jm
enclosure

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**Kirkpatrick, Pettis,
Smith, Polian Inc.**
Investment Bankers
A Mutual of Omaha Company

10250 Regency Circle, Suite 200
Omaha, NE 68114 • 402/397-5777

WHY DOES A SCHOOL DISTRICT NEED A FISCAL AGENT/BOND UNDERWRITER?

I. What specific services are provided?

We will -

A. Analyze the scope of the project, conduct a cash flow analysis, and explore financing alternatives in order to develop a well-documented financing plan that will be conducive to voter acceptance.

B. Coordinate the bond election information campaign by developing a pertinent timetable of events, by organizing citizen committees through the assignment of clearly stated objectives, by preparing fact sheets and election brochures for public distribution, and by representing the District at committee and public meetings.

C. Oversee the preparation of all necessary legal proceedings with a nationally recognized bond attorney, such as calling a bond election, publishing notices of election and ballot form, authorizing the issuance of bonds, obtaining an unqualified final legal opinion as to the legality and tax-exemption of the bonds, and providing a complete election and bond transcript to the District.

D. Seek to market the District's debt obligations at the lowest net interest costs by pledging our own capital to the District (negotiated sale) or by obtaining competitive bids from interested financial institutions (public sale).

E. Provide for the printing and registration of the bonds; ensure a timely, efficient closing; and recommend effective investment alternatives for bond proceeds.

F. Monitor the District's outstanding debt obligations for potential refunding opportunities that will reduce interest costs and tax requirements.

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II. How is the citizen campaign committee selection handled?

We have found that the selection of citizen committees must initially be a responsibility of the Board and Administration. Each individual should make recommendations of supportive citizens from a master list of District patrons being careful to achieve a representative cross-section of local life styles. We provide a sample letter of invitation to selected citizens to attend a committee organizational meeting. Once committee leadership is identified for specific campaign committees, each committee can recruit neighbors and friends for detailed assignments.

III. How are the citizen campaign committees organized?

On the evening of the committee organizational meeting mentioned in the previous answer, we would provide an agenda for the conduct of the general meeting. We would review the overall objectives of each of the committees (usually numbering three) and all pertinent facts of the issue to that date. We would then have each separate committee hold their own meeting at which time we would hand out committee agendas stating specific objectives to be accomplished. We will also discuss with each committee some useful strategies to help them achieve their objectives successfully. We will provide sample materials that can be adapted and utilized by each committee.

IV. How long does it take to present a bond issue?

We think that the actual campaign for a successful bond election should take between 6 to 8 weeks from the time the District has determined the scope of the project and generally accepted the preliminary design of the facility(s). At this point, the size of the bond issue could be determined and campaign committees would have enough pertinent information to disseminate to their neighbors and friends.

V. When is the best time to conduct a bond election?

We think that the months of September or October are the best times to hold bond elections with April and May running a close second. However, we have experienced successful bond issues in every month of the year.

VI. What are our bonding limitations?

There is no concrete limitation - whatever the public perceives to be a reasonable tax increase to support your proposed building program as measured by the magnitude of the need for the new facilities. Normally, the higher the tax increase the more difficult it will be to pass the issue. (Some states have a statutory debt limitation for political subdivisions, such as 5% or 10% of the taxable valuation.)

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VII. How long should bonds be outstanding?

The length of maturity for a bond issue varies with the size of the issue and the tax base of the District supporting the issue. Normally, we suggest that you do not exceed twenty years due to the increased interest cost in longer term bonds. We will want to analyze the tax levy increases necessary with various maturity schedules to help you determine a practical, reasonable maturity schedule and the consequent tax levy that voters can support.

VIII. What are current interest rates and market trends?

We would estimate a twenty-year general obligation bond issue to have an average interest rate ranging between ____% to ____% in today's market. The national gauge for general obligation bonds (Bond Buyer Index - "20 Bond Index" with twenty-year A-1 rated bonds) stands at ____% as of a recent report.

IX. How are interest rates determined on bond issues?

Our confidence in our ability to market local securities allows us to aggressively price your bonds at very competitive interest rates. We will show you rates of comparable issuers in the same market place so you will have every indication of exactly where bond interest rates are at the time of your actual issuance. We have been a very active underwriter and trader of school bonds. We have established retail and institutional marketing capabilities second to none for regional local government securities.

X. Will bonds be offered locally?

Yes, most definitely! We have always made it a policy to offer bonds to patrons of the District first. We would want you to indicate those citizens that you think may be interested so that they can be contacted immediately once the bonds are offered. We may also include other local and regional investment firms in a "selling group" to market your bonds.

XI. What bond rating would our bonds have?

Most school bonds would carry a rating from Moody's Rating Service somewhere between AA to BAA. Many school districts never seek a bond rating because the bond underwriter can often market their bonds at interest rates equivalent to (or sometimes even lower than) the interest rates that the districts would obtain had they received a bond rating.

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XII. How are bond payments cycled in with the normal lag in tax collections?

We will conduct a complete cash flow analysis for you to determine the appropriate size of the issue. We will look at structuring alternatives for your debt taking into account the receipt of tax collections, the monthly construction payouts, and the interest earnings on the investment of bond proceeds during the construction period.

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Kirkpatrick, Pettis, Smith, Polian Inc.
Investment Bankers
A Mutual of Omaha Company

10250 Regency Circle, Suite 200
Omaha, NE 68114 • 402/397-5777

DATE

Dear Board Members and Administrators:

We understand that you are contemplating a program financing for proposed capital improvements. In connection therewith, we hereby wish to offer our services to act as your fiscal agent/bond underwriter for said project as follows:

Election Strategy

1. Personally represent the District at any committee or public meetings authorized by the Board.
2. Work closely, and in complete cooperation with the Board of Education, Administration, the District's legal counsel, and the Architect for the Board of Education.
3. Analyze the Project, including alternatives, in order to develop and recommend to the Board well-documented financing plans that will be conducive to voter acceptance.
4. Develop and initiate the "Election Timetable".
5. Assist the Board and Administration in selecting Citizens' Committees and develop specific objectives for each committee to accomplish.
6. In cooperation with the Board, Administration and Architect, prepare and distribute to committees and/or voters:
    a. Factual information on project need and financial implications ... election brochures.
    b. Anticipated questions and answers.

Legal Proceedings

1. We will obtain a firm of recognized municipal bond attorneys, who will prepare and furnish the necessary transcript of legal proceedings, which will include:

    a. Proceedings for calling and holding a bond election.

    b. A review of notices for publication and instructions for appropriate publication.

    c. Proceedings authorizing the issuance of bonds.

    d. An unqualified final legal opinion as to the legality of the bonds and final closing certificates.

Sale of Bonds

1. We will advise and recommend to the Board the appropriate time to sell bonds, considering factors such as:

    a. Interest rates on comparable issues ... locally and nationally.

    b. Other municipal bond issues that are imminent which could have an effect on the District's interest rate ... favorable or detrimental.

    c. Interest rates on the reinvestment of bond proceeds.

2. The District will have the following options:

    a. Negotiated bids may be conducted between the Board of Education and Kirkpatrick Pettis for the purchase of your bonds. We will guarantee a definite market for your bonds by agreeing to purchase said bonds. An average rate of interest to maturity (based on then-current bond market rates) and the underwriter's discount of ______%, shall be mutually agreed upon by all parties at the time of the issuance of the bonds.

    b. In the event an interest rate satisfactory to both parties cannot be agreed upon, we will prepare a comprehensive Official Statement and Notice of Sale for distribution to potential bidders and will assist you in the conduct of a sale for your bonds, including tabulation and verification of bids submitted.

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Bond Issuance and Investment of Funds

1. We will ensure that a timely and efficient closing is effected and that the bond proceeds are available to the District.

2. We will arrange for the printing and registration of the bonds at the state level and provide the District with a complete election and bond transcript.

3. The timely and efficient reinvestment of bond proceeds can have an impact on overall project costs. Accordingly, we will:

    a. In conjunction with the Board and Architect, develop a construction pay-out schedule to permit maximum investment return.

    b. Assist and make recommendations as to interim investments from settlement on the bonds until such funds are required for payment to contractors.

Refunding Bonds

1. After bond issuance we will continue to monitor the District's outstanding bonds. In the event that interest rates decline, enabling the District to reduce its interest cost by refunding its bonds, we will provide the Board with:

    a. Interest savings computations.

    b. Proceedings to effect a refunding.

Expenses

In the event bonds are sold to KP, we will pay the expenses of bond counsel and the printing of bonds/certificates. The School District will pay for registrar and paying agent fees to service the debt payments on a semi-annual basis, and all other issuance and election expenses.

In the event the authorized school bonds are sold to a purchaser (as defined in Sale of Bonds, Section 2b) other than KP, we will act exclusively as your financial consultant for such issue. Fees for our services would cover our out-of-pocket expenses and time and are not expected to exceed $_______ per $1,000 of bonds/certificates issued with a minimum fee of $________ for each separate issue. The School District would pay all other costs associated with the bond issue including bond counsel fees and the costs of printing the bonds/certificates.

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In the event the financing is not undertaken or an election is not successful, the District is under no financial obligation to us.

Respectfully submitted,

KIRKPATRICK PETTIS

by ______________________________
Darwin Reider
First Vice President

APPROVED AND ACCEPTED on behalf of the Board of Education this ____ day of ____________, ____.

____
Business Manager

____
President

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